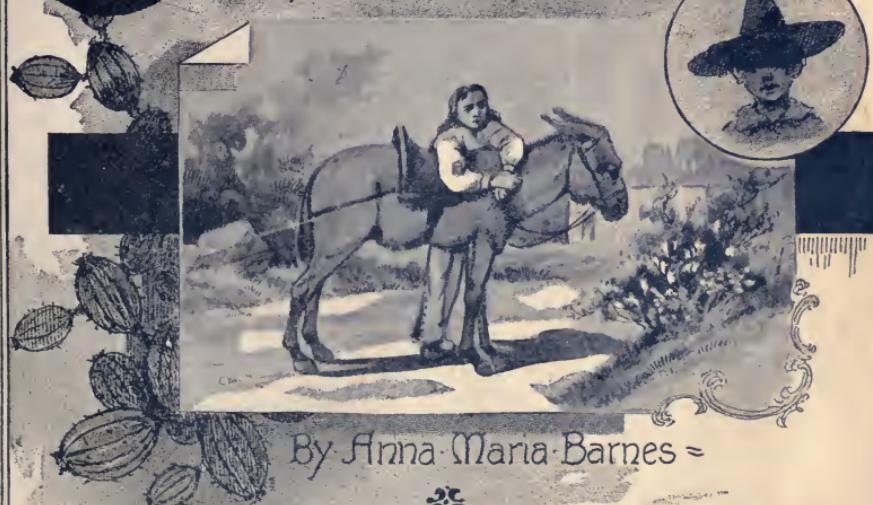


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By Anna Maria Barnes =

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CHONITA

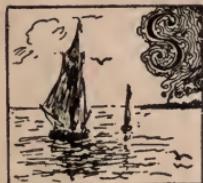


ANNA MARIA BARNE

David C. Cook Publishing Company, Elgin, Ill., and 36 Washington St., Chicago.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOY AND HIS BURROS.



OULD you ever go to Chihuahua, Mexico, and visit the mines of the New York Mining Company, the entrance to which is away up near the top of the blue Sierra Madras, one of the quaintest things you would see on the way would be the village of Santa Eulalia. It is hung like a bird's nest between the crags, and you do not see it until you are directly above it. Then, as the railway winds around it, and you catch view after view from different points, you cannot but exclaim over its beauty and picturesqueness.

Alas that anything so attractive should have so bad a reputation! For many un-

pleasant things are told of Santa Eulalia. They say it is the resort of bandits, also that numbers of its inhabitants are known as "scab-miners." This means that they steal ore from the regular mines, and smelt it in the crude-looking furnaces with which Santa Eulalia is dotted here and there.

In the years in which this story opens, there were living at Santa Eulalia the Widow Hernandez and her family, which consisted of a son and two daughters. They were poor but worthy people. Indeed, the widow was a devout member of the church, and endeavored to train her children well, as far as she had light.

Juan, the son, was fifteen years old. He was a good boy, sunny-tempered and industrious, the pride and joy of his mother's heart. Every other day he went into Chihuahua — thirteen miles away

across the plains — with his drove of burros (donkeys), five in number, laden with wares for the market. Generally, these wares consisted of goat's milk curd, cheese, and bundles of the mesquite wood, without which no cook in Chihuahua, except the charcoal cooks, could get along. Now and then, Juan would add to his wares goat's meat freshly killed, and sometimes the kids themselves. In this way he earned sufficient to support his mother and sisters, and even to make occasional offerings of flowers, ribbons, and pictures at the shrine of the Virgin in the beautiful old church, the cross on the spire of which could be seen all over Santa Eulalia.

On the alternate days — that is, the days he was not in Chihuahua — Juan was away on the mountains looking after his little flock of goats, and seeing that his burros had good picking places. Sometimes his goats led him a chase over spurs so precipitous that he had to watch carefully every foot-place; or again, his burros would wander off, to be located at last at the very bottom of some almost inaccessible ravine. But Juan loved the mountains, and was never happier than when climbing from peak to peak, or lying at full length along some precipitous ledge, watching the sun come up from his bed of mists in the valley. To him the blue, majestic summit of the Sierra Grande, with its indescribable tints at sunrise, and its purpling shadows when evening had

come, was the most beautiful thing upon which his eyes had ever rested.

One evening Juan lay thus along a ledge of his favorite Sierra Colonial watching the shadows gather on the summit of the Sierra Grande. His burros were picking around him. There were Guavo, Elnona, Wachita, Pompono and Chonita. Juan knew each by name, though three of them were very much alike, and loved each dearly. But perhaps, though he would not have confessed it then, he loved Chonita a little better than any of the others. Chonita was a small gray donkey with a black spot on one of her cheeks and another midway of her back. The black spot on her cheek made her look exactly as though she had hurt herself, and someone had hastily put on a great piece of black court-plaster. For the rest, she had a white breast, which Juan was always caressing, and half of a white stocking on each hind foot.

As Juan lay there, his eyes on the sunset, it was not with his usual enjoyment. Something had occurred the day before to greatly disturb him, and he was thinking about it now. There was a debt that Juan's father had owed. In some way the man to whom it was due held the family responsible for it now that the father was dead. Again and again he had annoyed Juan about it. The boy had honestly tried to pay all he could, but he earned so little after all that only a mite now and then could be spared. The man,

had grown impatient, and only the day before had threatened to seize the family possessions. At the same time, he had

that would overwhelm them if the animals were gone.

He got up, went to Chonita, and flung his arms around her neck. She stopped grazing to glance at him with gentle, in-



Every other day he went into Chihuahua with his drove of donkeys.—See page 1.

“Suppose he should take Guavo, Pompono, my dear Chonita, and the others?” murmured Juan; “what would we do?”

His eyes filled with tears, as much at the thought of losing the burros, doubtless more, as at the thought of the poverty

quiring eyes, and to rub her rough little nose against the sleeve of his plain woolen shirt.

“Oh, I just couldn’t stand it!” he cried, “my dear, sweet Chonita, and Pompono, and all the rest!”

Just then he heard a voice calling him

It was a clear though high-pitched voice, and sounded at a distance.

He went to the ledge and looked downward. On a bit of tableland below, his younger sister, Paulina, was standing. She beckoned to him, then placing a hand on either side of her mouth, called loudly, "Come down, Juan, and come quickly! The Señor Miguel is here, and is waiting to see you. He seems very impatient."

Juan could hear his heart begin to beat. The Señor Miguel was the man to whom his father owed the debt! If he could but run away, and take all his burros with him!—at least until that hateful man was gone. But what good would that do in the end? He could never carry them into Chihuahua again, and unless the burros could go into Chihuahua, they could not earn anything more for Juan, his mother and sisters. He gave the call the burros knew so well, then started down the mountain, the obedient creatures in a little flock before him.

As he neared his home he saw the Señor Miguel walking impatiently up and down the little plot of ground in front of the house. He was in no good humor, as Juan could see at once.

"I thought you were never coming!" he said, breaking forth as soon as his eyes rested upon Juan. "That sister of yours has been gone an age, it seems to me."

"It was hard to find him," spoke Paulina at this point; "besides, I had a long distance to go."

She tried to speak calmly and politely, for the Widow Hernandez had taught all her children to treat their elders respectfully; but it could be seen that the rough words as well as the rough manner had hurt her very much. Her eyes filled with tears.

"I came as soon as my sister found me," answered Juan, but not so calmly as Paulina had done. Truth to tell, his heart was fast filling with both indignation and resentment.

"I see you have brought the burros," said Señor Miguel, "but I thought there were five."

"There are five," answered Juan.

"But I only see four."

For the first time Juan lifted his head and looked at the burros. Sure enough, there were only four, and the one missing was Chonita! Juan could have shouted as this fact became apparent. But he put a check upon himself, and gave no outward evidence of his joy. So occupied had he been with his sad thoughts, as he came down from the mountain, that he had not noticed that Chonita had turned aside from the other donkeys. He was certain she had started down the mountain with them, for he had seen her.

"There are only four burros," repeated Señor Miguel.

"I started with five," replied Juan. "I suppose one turned aside to graze again."

"And you did not notice it?" Señor Miguel asked this incredulously.

"I did not," said Juan, smothering his indignation to answer politely. "I did not know when she left the others."

"I must have the other donkey," declared Señor Miguel; "the four will not do. I suppose, boy, you know what my coming means. I can wait no longer. I have waited now longer than many men would have done. Your father owed me the debt, and owed it honestly. I must have my money, or what is the same as the money. I must have the burros, as there seems nothing else," glancing around the poor little place as he spoke. "Here is the man with the papers," pointing to one who stood near. "I have gone according to the law; I hope you will give no trouble. It will be best if you don't," and he looked at them meaningfully.

The Widow Hernandez approached at this moment. She was very pale, and her fingers as they laced and interlaced were trembling.

"Señor," she said, "if you take the burros you take our only means of living. You surely will not be so harsh?"

"There is that strapping boy of yours," returned the man, pointing to Juan. "He is big enough to work at almost anything. Let him find another way."

"He has tried again and again, but he is not yet grown, and so can't do a man's work. The burros are our only support. O Señor, you surely will spare them to us?"

"No, I won't. I've done enough al-

ready, by waiting as I have, and more too. I ought to have taken them long ago. I gave you chance after chance to pay the money, a part at a time. You wouldn't do it — now you can take the consequences."

"We couldn't pay. I have told you the burros were all we had. They hardly brought us in enough to live, for things sell at a song in Chihuahua. Now what are we to do when even they are taken from us?"

She stopped, overcome with emotion, and the tears began to roll down her cheeks.

"It was not a just debt," she continued. "It was for naught of benefit to me or to the children. My husband was led into it, and by you. Oh, it is wrong, wicked of you to press us so for what is not our fault, for a debt so unjust!"

The Señor Miguel did not reply. He merely turned to Juan and said:

"Go and get me the other burro."

"I do not know where it is."

"Go and hunt it."

"But it is nearly dark, and I have not had my supper."

"That makes no difference; go and bring the burro. And see here, don't be all night about it! I must leave this place early in the morning."

The widow tried to interpose, to plead for her son. She said, "He is hungry; he has been away all day. Do let him stay and get his supper. Then he can go."

"No; let him go without it. He will come back all the quicker."

Juan turned away, hot with indignation. To one thing he made up his mind. In five and a half years he would be a man. The first thing he would do would be to punish Señor Miguel.

He had no idea where Chonita was. He hoped he would never find her again, at least if this man was to have her. He would rather she would stay lost all the days of her life. What a knowing little thing she was anyhow! Of course, she had understood, and had done this purposely. Smart Chonita! Juan was more than ever convinced that Chonita was indeed an unusual donkey.

He did not go directly back toward the mountain. He was in no hurry even to search for Chonita. He didn't care if he stayed out all night. Really it would be a good thing to keep the Señor Miguel in suspense. He deserved it. Moreover, he should not have Chonita if Juan could prevent it. As to Juan's supper, he could do without that until morning. What had happened had taken away his appetite.

Juan walked down one of the narrow alleys of the town, and turned toward the Catholic church. He could see the white spire and the cross gleaming through the dark.

As he passed around it, his attention was attracted to a crowd that had gathered in front of a stone building that

served as a kind of warehouse, where cargoes going back and forth across the mountains were deposited for safe keeping while the men and burros rested. The crowd was very noisy. Indeed, it seemed to be getting angry. Now and then Juan could hear a cry, which he knew meant, "Stone him! Stone him!"

As he drew near he saw a man standing on the steps of the warehouse. Juan recognized him at once. It was Mr. Morris, a missionary from Chihuahua. He was talking to the people and very earnestly. Some of them seemed to be listening intently; others again were very angry and were frowning. A few were even demonstrative in their anger. They were doubtless the ones whom Juan had heard crying, "Stone him! Stone him!"

Mr. Morris' face was pale, and he glanced about him anxiously, but he seemed determined to finish what he was saying.

"Why will you not see that it is Jesus only who can satisfy! Why can you not understand that our sins flee only as he enters our hearts and stays with us!—that it is he alone who can help us to make the best of our lives! Oh, believe it, turn to him, pray to him alone, and he will care for you."

Juan could see that the anger of the crowd was increasing. He realized the danger even more than the missionary, for he knew how the loving words would be interpreted. This Mr. Morris was not

altogether unheard-of in Santa Eulalia. Wild reports which represented him as fiercely attacking the tenets of their church had reached the village, and they looked upon him, not unnaturally, as a meddlesome interloper whose presence might prove as harmful as needless.

Juan himself was not free from this feeling, yet he was more sympathetic than the others. He knew the missionary very well, for he had seen him now and then when he went to Chihuahua to sell his wares, and Mr. Morris had always greeted him with a kind word and a pleasant smile.

Oh, if he could only get to him, and beg him to stop, at least for this time! What was going to come of all these black looks and threatening gestures? Juan had seen riots in the mining village before this.

“Jesus wants you,” the missionary continued, “Jesus loves you. Why will you not give him your love? Why will you not seek the joy of his companionship? ‘Whom have I in heaven but thee? and on earth there is none that I desire beside thee!’”

Worse and worse! Was not the Blessed Virgin in heaven? Were not the saints there? This was sacrilege. How dared this man do such a thing? Ought he to be allowed to live, after such utterances?

A wild cry arose. Stones began to fly. One had already struck the missionary. There was blood trickling down his

cheek. Juan saw how great was the danger. He never stopped to think that he, too, would be exposed to it if he acted as his brave heart now prompted him to act. No, indeed; he never paused to consider anything save that the missionary was in danger, and that he must act. Bracing himself, Juan sprang forward, and darted with the grace and agility of a young deer through the crowd and toward the spot where Mr. Morris stood.

CHAPTER II.

JUAN HAS AN ADVENTURE.



R. MORRIS was standing on the steps of the warehouse. There were six steps in all, and he was upon the top one. Behind him were the huge, wooden doors of the warehouse. They were double doors, and, even as Juan ran, he could see that one of them was partly ajar. He gave an exclamation of thankfulness as he noted it. The warehouse had doubtless not yet been closed for the night.

Juan sprang up the steps three at a time. In two bounds he was beside Mr. Morris. The crowd was now yelling wildly, and the stones still flying, though more at random than at first. One at that moment struck Juan on the arm. It

stung, but he had no time to think of it further.

He caught Mr. Morris by the hand. "The warehouse! The warehouse!" he cried. "Get inside the warehouse!"

As he spoke, he drew the missionary toward the door that stood ajar, and pushed against it. It did not yield. Then he threw his strong young body upon it with full force. There was still no sign of yielding. There was doubtless something very heavy against it. Juan felt his heart come into his throat. He was in despair. Was the missionary to perish after all? The brave boy still thought nothing of himself, but only of another.

"Try the other door!" someone shouted from among the crowd — a friend, Juan knew, not only from the words, but from the intonation of the voice.

Following the suggestion, Juan rushed headlong against the other door, dragging the missionary after him. The heavy door had merely been closed without anything against it. The consequence was that Juan went tumbling over on the floor of the warehouse, and the missionary down upon him. But beyond a bruise or two neither was hurt, and both recovered themselves in a few seconds.

"Run!" cried Juan in the missionary's ear, "run through the warehouse, but look out for the bales and boxes! There is a window at the back. It is generally open at this time to let the air through

the house. It opens almost upon the foot of the mountain. We can jump out there, and rush away, away up the side of the mountain before they hardly know what we are doing. Do come, Señor Morris. Please follow me."

The missionary made no further hesitation. He saw the earnestness of the brave boy, and for the first time fully realized the danger.

They ran through the warehouse, stumbling only once or twice, but luckily not hurting themselves. The window was reached. It was open, and through it gleamed in the starlight the foot of the mountain peak. Juan gave a little cry of joy. He sprang upon a box, then upon the window ledge, and out through the open space, alighting upon his feet like a cat. The missionary was more careful, for he had neither Juan's youth nor agility. He sat upon the window ledge and swung himself down by means of his hands.

By this time the crowd was heard rushing toward the rear of the building. They had divined the plan of escape, and had determined to prevent it.

While Mr. Morris had occupied the time swinging downward from the window, Juan had stood with his heart beating so loudly he felt sure it must be heard. Suppose Mr. Morris did not regain his feet in time to make that spring up the mountain? He ought to be at least a half-dozen lengths ahead ere the crowd

reached the rear of the building, otherwise there would be no hope of escape.

The moment the missionary's feet touched the ground, Juan grasped him by the hand.

"Now, Señor Morris, now! Let us fly up the mountain. That is the only chance. Run with all your might! The crowd is nearly here! Run, Señor Morris, run!"

Even at that moment some faces had appeared at the corner of the building. But the missionary and his brave young guide had already begun the flight up the mountain. They were barely six lengths ahead, when the foremost of the men reached the starting-point and began the pursuit.

Juan leaped up the mountain like a young goat, urging, pulling, almost dragging the missionary. He was putting forth every effort, and his breath was coming and going in gasps; still he felt that he was good for a long run yet. But with the missionary it was not so well. He already showed signs of considerable exhaustion. His wound, too, was still bleeding, and this doubtless served to partially weaken him. As Juan glanced at him, he felt sure Mr. Morris could not stand this very long.

He turned his head to see how near the pursuers were. His heart sank like lead when he noted how much they had gained. Others had joined the first three, and there were now ten or twelve

speeding up the mountain. A thought struck Juan. He did not wish to be cruel or to hurt anyone, but it seemed to him the only thing he could do under the circumstances. He quickly detached a stone and sent it rolling down the mountain. He heard a sharp exclamation from one of the pursuers, and, raising his head, saw that the man had been struck on the foot, and doubtless hurt, for he was now in a kneeling posture. Those around him had also paused. As they were in the front line of pursuers, this mishap to one had served for the moment to check all. But in a little while, the wounded man having been left to the care of another, the chase was renewed. Evidently now the men were more angered than before. Juan

knew that it would go hard, not only with the missionary, but with himself, should they be caught. But they must not be caught. Upon this he was more than ever resolved.

Small stones and sticks began now to fly about them. The men could hurl these upward, if they could not the larger ones downward. One struck Juan between the shoulders and almost took the breath from him.

"Fall on your face!" he cried to the missionary, doing the same thing himself. "It is the only way. They will kill us if we do not. Now roll down all the stones you can find. Please do, Señor Morris. We must keep them from coming."

The missionary did not like this mode

of warfare, but, urged by Juan, and realizing how grave indeed was the situation, at last consented.

The stones began to roll thick and fast down the mountain side, far more vigorously from Juan's hands than from the missionary's. The men seemed at first determined to come on despite the falling stones, but as several of them were now hurt, more or less painfully, they gave up the pursuit, not, however, without many oaths and ugly threats of vengeance.

"They are gone," said Juan, "and I do not think they will come again. We are safe now."

For the first time Mr. Morris spoke to Juan. He turned around to look into his face, his eyes shining.

"You have saved my life," he said, "my brave boy! But I am afraid you have put your own in peril. You live in the village. When you go among them again, they are sure to do you harm. Oh, why did I let you do it?"

"Don't think of me!" said Juan gently. "I can manage. They will not hurt me openly. Besides, there were friends as well as enemies in the crowd to-night."

"Oh, if they had but listened!" continued the missionary, more to himself than to Juan. "Why would they not hear the truth?"

"It was the Virgin — what they thought you meant about the Virgin — that made them so angry," spoke Juan timidly. "They could not stand that."

The missionary looked at him in astonishment.

"Why, what was it about the Virgin?" he asked.

"You only talked about praying to Jesus — you seemed to think the Virgin was of no account, and that only God could hear prayers."

"And only God can, my boy."

"But we pray to the Virgin," continued Juan. "We give her money, and flowers, and ribbons, and pretty things, and we ask her for what we want. She beseeches God, then he hears."

"The Virgin was a woman, as your own mother," continued the missionary, "only she was honored above all women in having been chosen the mother of our Savior, and for that reason our reverence must be hers. But it is God, the dear Jesus, who should be everything to us. He has made us. He must love us. He alone can fold us safely in his bosom. He alone has all power to hear and to answer." Mr. Morris looked upward to the stars as he spoke. They were shining as so many twinkling lamps in the vault above.

"The same God made those," said the missionary; "he is our Strength and Refuge."

They had reached a point a little more than midway up the mountain. The place where they had fallen on their faces was a small depression that seemed to have been scooped out like a basin. All around were fragments of rock, and it

was by the use of these that the pursuers had been baffled.

Juan arose and straightened himself. As he did so, an exclamation of pain escaped him, which he did his best to smother, for he did not want Mr. Morris to hear it. How the spot between his shoulders did ache! He hoped it would not be anything serious. But he forgot his own pain in thought for Mr. Morris. His wound was still bleeding, though not so much as at first, and by the clear starlight Juan could see that it was going to be an ugly place. He prevailed upon the missionary to bind his handkerchief around it as tightly as he could, for he knew it ought not to bleed any more.

"Señor Morris," said Juan, "this will not do for a place to spend the night, but I know where there is one. Even if the men didn't come back to hunt us, it would grow so cool before morning it would chill us to stay here. It is not so very far to a spot where you can stay not only to-night, but to-morrow, and as much longer as you like."

As the boy stopped speaking, the missionary arose to follow him. They went slowly and carefully up the mountain, for there was no need now for haste. Besides, there were many loose stones that might have given them a fall every now and then if they had not noted the pathway closely.

At the summit they paused. Beneath them lay the village, its lights twinkling

here and there, the murmur of voices coming to them even at that distance. The old church looked whiter than ever, its cross gleaming in the starlight. All around them were the mountains, peak after peak, their sides wrapped in the shadows, the small colored stones on their summits—a characteristic of the Mexican mountains—catching and reflecting the glitter of the stars.

Juan walked directly across the summit and began to descend the peak, the missionary following. On the way they passed several goats that were grazing. Juan spoke to two or three of them familiarly, and by the way they responded, it was easy to see to whom they belonged.

On a narrow ledge they suddenly came face to face with a couple of coyotes. They were evidently hungry and meant to give Juan and the missionary some trouble, but on the former raising his arms and giving vent to a shrill cry, they turned and sped away into the darkness.

"They would have liked to have a nip from off our legs," said Juan to the missionary. "It isn't often they're so bold as that, standing right across your path. I guess those fellows were pretty hungry."

They were now almost down the mountain. They had apparently descended into a ravine. If it had not been that the moon had come out, it would have been difficult indeed to see how to walk. There were clumps of stunted mesquite through which they had to pass and now and then

stretches of cactus. They had to go with much care through the latter, so as to keep the spines from piercing their feet. But Juan seemed to be following a kind of trail, and to know just where to step. They crossed the space between the peak they had descended and the one opposite, then they walked for some little distance along a ledge that seemed to encircle the latter, and to ascend gradually. A moment later Juan disappeared behind a jutting ledge of rock, with such suddenness that the missionary thought surely he must have fallen and rolled from view. It was not till Juan called to him and appeared again around the angle of the rock that he felt reassured.

"The hiding-place is behind here, Señor. Stoop and pass through the opening in the mesquite, and you will see how easy it is."

As he spoke, he held aside some of the thorn branches, and the missionary, stooping as he had been told, found himself on the other side of the rock. They went some paces through a narrow passage, and then he saw that they were in a cave. He could not tell how large it was, for beyond the dim circle of light that lay about the inner opening of the passage all was darkness.

"There will be more light in the day time," said Juan, "but now we will go farther in and strike a fire of mesquite wood. If we have it too near the opening some one may see the blaze."

He took from his pocket some of the little wax matches used in Mexico, which can be lighted from either end, and, after groping for some distance in the dark, struck one of them, and lighted a fragment or two of the dry mesquite wood. The light was sufficient to show the surroundings of the space of several feet.

The floor of the cave was perfectly dry. In one corner was a straw mat, and over it a blanket. Some stones were near the little blaze and made excellent seats. One of them was close beside it. It was smooth and flat on top, and showed that on it had been cooked the tortillas — cakes of corn-meal and water so common among the poor in Mexico. From a stone jar, which he took from an excavation in the side of the cave, Juan gave the missionary a drink of water. Then from the same receptacle he brought some boiled goat's meat, some baked frijolles (beans), and some corn cakes that he had cooked himself the day before.

"Why, you are regularly keeping house here!" said Mr. Morris with a smile, and looking upon all the boy's proceedings with no little astonishment.

"Yes, Señor, I come here very often to eat and even to sleep. Sometimes the goats lead me a chase over the mountains, and it is too far to go home. One day I found this cave just by chance. No one had been here — at least, not for a long time; I felt sure of that. I made up my mind I would keep house in it. It would

be fun as well as convenience. No one attend to it himself after a little. He knows of it except my sister Paulina, for had some sticking-plaster in his pocket. I couldn't get the things from home without her help. Then Paulina is as good as another boy; she would not tell for anything. Sometimes we come here when it is raining and keep house together. That is, the days when Paulina helps me with the goats and the burros."

He busied himself waiting on the missionary; then he ate his own supper of the goat's meat and tortillas.

Juan noticed that though the missionary was evidently hungry, he did not eat very heartily. The wound on his cheek was troubling him, giving him much pain. Every now and then he put his hand to it as though he would press the aching away.

Juan brought some water in a little stone bowl and offered to bathe the wound. He was as nice as a girl about his house. Mr. Morris thanked him, and told him keeping. Then he turned to the missionary to worry about it, that he would say and said:



They walked for some distance along a ledge.—See page 12.

"I am so sorry I must go now, but I will come in the morning to see how you are and what you would like to do. I must go now and look for Chonita."

The missionary glanced up quickly. "Why, who is Chonita?" he asked.

CHAPTER III.

THE MISSIONARY WRITES A NOTE.



OR a moment Juan seemed astonished. As if anyone could fail to know Chonita! Then he remembered that the missionary did not live here but in Chihuahua. How-

ever, Chonita had been to the mission-house. It was too bad he had not noticed her there. But since the missionary really did not know about Chonita, why, he must certainly tell him; and not only about Chonita, but about the trouble, too, that had come. The missionary was good and true, whatever might be said of him. He would prove a friend, Juan felt sure.

"What kind of a debt was it, Juan, that your father owed the Señor Miguel?"

"I do not know exactly, Señor; it was something about a game."

"Ah, a gambling debt! Surely the law can not be so bad as to hold a man's family responsible for a thing of that kind? Could you not get him to wait?" he turned to ask Juan.

"No, Señor, he has been after us a long time. It is more than three years since my father made the debt. Señor Miguel has threatened and threatened. I have paid him all I could, a mite at a time. Now he has taken the burros, all that we had left, all but Chonita, and now I must go and find Chonita — if I can."

Juan added this hesitatingly, but there was that in his face which made the missionary feel assured that if he could, Juan would find Chonita, though it was but to part with her — such was the rugged honesty of his nature.

Juan turned away with a sigh. He could not refrain from saying, "What shall we do now that the burros are to go?"

"Juan," said the missionary, as the boy was starting from the cave, "wait a moment. Have you ever tried to get work in the San Domingo?"

The San Domingo was the principal mine operated by the New York Company.

"No, Señor," returned Juan, "I have not. I knew it would be no use. They will not take anyone who lives in Santa Eulalia. You know what they think of the place?"

Yes, Mr. Morris knew only too well, for he had heard his friend Mr. Caldwell, the Superintendent, say many times.

"But they ought not to think everybody in the place is bad because many are. However, I suppose it is but evidence

of the truth of the old saying about living in bad company. Juan, my boy," continued Mr. Morris, "I want to persuade you to go to the mine, and to carry a note to my friend, Mr. Caldwell. I feel sure he will give you a hearing, if he does not now give you a place. You must let me do all I can for you; for remember what you have done for me—as brave a deed as boy could do, Juan. God bless you for it. I don't see how one so young could have such courage."

Juan hung his head and looked confused. He was as modest as he was brave, and the missionary's words really made him feel ashamed.

The missionary took a pencil and notebook from his pocket. He tore out a blank leaf, and wrote these words thereon:

"My dear Friend Caldwell:—The bearer of this, Juan Hernandez, lives in Santa Eulalia. I tell you this first that you may get over the worst at the beginning. Yes, Juan lives at Santa Eulalia, but he isn't at all like what you think can only come from there. Indeed, he is a good boy, a truly good boy. I can speak for him with all my heart. He has been taking care of himself, his mother, and sisters, by peddling in Chihuahua by means of a small drove of burros. But now, through a stroke of ill fortune, the burros have been taken from him, and he must seek work elsewhere. Do give him something in or about the mine, if you can. He is willing and worthy. Anything you do for him I will consider a personal favor.

Truly your friend,
William T. Morris."

Juan hunted faithfully for Chonita, hunted till nearly daylight. Then he lay down for two hours' sleep, the sleep of

exhaustion, under the shelter of an overhanging ledge, his head pillow'd against a stone.

When at sunrise he presented himself before Señor Miguel without the remaining donkey, the latter gave way to a violent burst of wrath. But soon, seeing that this would do no good, and that he could not force inatters any further, he wisely took his departure.

Juan climbed to the top of a stout Palma Christi that grew in the yard, and watched the burros as they filed down the mountain path in front of their new owner. When he could see them no more, he put his hands before his face and burst into tears. So all were gone! Guavo, Pompono, and all the rest, all but Chonita—yes, all but Chonita! Juan's heart gave a little leap of joy as he remembered that Chonita was left. But where was Chonita? Perhaps he would find her this very day as he went to the mine, for he had determined to do as the good missionary had suggested—go to the mine, and at once.

Before he went to the mine, however, two things must be done. He must tell his mother where he was going and for what purpose, and he must let Paulina know of the occupant of the cave. Mr. Morris had said very positively that he did not believe he would feel like going back to Chihuahua that day, so Paulina must carry him some dinner.

Juan wondered how much his mother

and sisters had heard of the occurrence of the night before at the warehouse, and of his part in it. He was afraid that some one had been to tell them, some one who had alarmed them very much. He was rejoiced later to find that, as yet, they had heard nothing. The widow and her daughters mingled very little with the population of Santa Eulalia. Beyond a few tried friends, who came occasionally, there was very little communication with things going on outside.

These matters arranged, Juan started on his trip to the San Domingo. It was fully five miles the way he had to go, and that was a shorter cut than the trail usually taken by the burros.

It was one o'clock in the afternoon ere he reached the top of the peak down through the heart of which ran the entrance to the San Domingo. Juan had been about the mouth of the mine several times before, but never down into it, nor in the offices near at hand.

He found Mr. Caldwell easily. The Superintendent received the boy kindly even before he read the note. When he had done that, he said with a smile, "My friend, Mr. Morris, is evidently impressed with my opinion of Santa Eulalia. And so you live there, my boy?"

"Yes, Señor," said Juan a little reluctantly.

"How long since you have lived there?"

"Ever since my younger sister, Paulina, was a baby — twelve years or more."

"And how old are you?"

"Fifteen and nearly a half. Come next St. John's day I'll be sixteen."

"Have you ever had any experience with ore?" Mr. Caldwell glanced at him keenly as he questioned.

"No, Señor, I have not." This was spoken very candidly.

The superintendent seemed satisfied. Still he looked the boy over closely, and asked him many more questions. Finally, he told him that he might come back on Monday, and he would try him for a month at twelve dollars.

Juan went away with a light heart. The sum was more than he had ever been able to earn in one month, by at least one fourth.

His mother and sisters, too, were rejoiced at the good news. As he stood talking to Paulina under the trees, she managed to tell him, so the others would not hear, that she had been to the cave as she had promised him, and carried the dinner, but had found the missionary with very little appetite for it. Indeed, he was suffering greatly from his wound.

"Oh, he is such a dear, good man!" declared Paulina, "and talked to me so sweetly. Juan," suddenly, "do you believe all he says about Jesus seeing us, hearing us, being with us and loving us all the time, and wanting us to be with him?"

"The missionary says it is so, querida," (dear one), "and he surely would not tell

us if it were not true. It is very beautiful the way he explains it."

"So it is. He told me all about it, and he read to me from a book. He called it

whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Doesn't it sound beautiful! God, the great God in heaven, loved us so well that he sent



Juan presented himself at the mine.—See page 16.

a Testament. Juan, there was something in there that just keeps talking in my heart."

"What was that, my Paulina?"

"It was a verse that he read over again and again to me, until I knew it. It was this: 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that

his Son to die for us, the only Son he had. Think now, Juan, what it would mean to the madre" (mother) "to send you to die just to make someone understand how much she and you loved him, so that he would see so much love that he couldn't feel hate again. O Juan, she just couldn't do it! It would break her heart. And

yet God sent his Son. Oh, how it must have hurt him to do it! And Jesus loved us so much that he wanted to die to prove his love to us. See, Juan, what the missionary gave me. This tells all about it."

As she spoke she turned her face away from the house, and took from the bosom of her dress a pocket Testament.

"The missionary read some of it to me, and told me about it," continued Paulina, "and then I read some myself. You know I can read very well, for I have been to school for ten months," proudly. "And, Juan, he said that I must read to you, every chance that I get."

Juan's face showed his pleasure, but in a little while it clouded.

"Paulina, pobrecita," (poor little one,) he said anxiously, "what will all our friends think? No one here carries a book like that."

"Oh, I am not going to let them know I have it," declared Paulina, cheerfully. "I will be careful."

"But will you not read to the madre and to Juanilita too?"

Juanilita was the older sister.

"Yes, Juan, just as soon as I find out they will not tell. But I am afraid now. I will learn some more of the beautiful things; then I will tell them, and they will want to hear more. How sweet it would be, Juan, if we could all believe these things, and talk about them happily in the little home together!"

Juan thought so, too, but he could not imagine what had come over his heart, that he was now willing to listen to these truths which were so new and strange to him.

"Paulina," asked he, after a little pause, "how was Mr. Morris' wound?"

"It looked very red and angry, and I fear he will have some fever. As you told me, Juanito, I took a part of the salve that mother made for your foot when it got such an angry cut. I don't believe Mr. Morris will be able to go back to Chihuahua for several days yet. The sun is so hot, it will hurt his head. He may not go there at all first. He says he wants to go further up in the mountains."

Juan knew that Mr. Morris was not the regular missionary at Chihuahua. Mr. Redmond was the one who stayed there all the time. Mr. Morris was what was known as a traveling missionary. That is, he went about preaching wherever he could get an audience.

The missionary had asked Juan, when he came back to the cave again, if he could, without any danger to himself, to bring his, Mr. Morris', riding mule, his traveling-bags and roll of blankets, which he had left with a friend in Santa Eulalia. Again and again he had entreated the boy not to expose himself to any trouble in order to accomplish this, and would not give him the commission until Juan had so promised. With the help of the same friend in whose care the

mule and bags had been left, Juan had them carried to a safe place of concealment, and at night, so as to prevent any spying. The same night he went to the spot, unfastened and mounted the mule, and started on his journey to the cave.

He had not more than set off when he had quite a fright; he felt sure he saw two men watching him. There were their shadows clearly defined on the rocks in the moonlight! They were evidently waiting for him at the angle of the path.

Juan realized that there was no retreat. He could not turn around because of the narrowness of the ledge. Neither could he swerve from the path, since on the one hand was the precipice, and on the other the sheer walls of the cliff. His only alternative was to go forward. This he did with a sinking heart, but bravely determined to sell his life as dearly as he could, and whatever came, not to tell where the missionary was concealed. This thought of all others was uppermost in Juan's mind — the thought of the kind missionary, and how he must save him at all hazards.

He drew himself erect in the saddle, and placed his knees firmly against the sides of the mule. The animal, a very intelligent one, seemed to realize that something unusual was coming, and was on the alert; otherwise there might have been a rear, a plunge, and down the precipice both mule and rider would doubtless have gone.

As Juan neared the angle, a man stepped out in the path directly in front of him, then another. Almost as soon as he came into view, the first man reached out his hand and seized the bridle of the mule. It was evident he feared some accident if he were not quick enough.

Juan's heart went to his throat, then gave another bound. The man had spoken. Juan recognized the voice even before he saw the face. It was the very friend who had cared for the mule and bags, and the man with him was a friend also. Manuel had forgotten a message he desired to send to the missionary, a very important one that he felt he must not neglect. He had come now to deliver it. Tonio had come with him for company. They had stood behind the ledge of rocks because there was no other place in the path where they could stand and let Juan pass safely.

It was with a relieved heart that Juan went on his way. What a fright he had had!

In an hour's time he reached the entrance to the cave. He decided that he would hitch the mule in the clump of mesquite outside, for that night at least, for he knew well enough it would take the mule some time to learn that trick he had so easily taught Chonita, the trick of bending the knees and passing through the opening in the mesquite. He had had no trouble with Chonita, but then — well, Chonita was Chonita, the very smart-

est donkey in all Mexico. What other an abandon of joy, then drew the rough one could do as Chonita?

Juan entered the cave and looked around quickly. Then an exclamation escaped him. It was deserted! The missionary was gone! Yes, he surely was gone, for Juan peered in every direction, and there was no trace of him. The little fire of mesquite wood was smoldering, but there was glow enough for him to see the bed and the distant corners. There was no missionary anywhere. Juan's uneasiness grew to positive alarm. Someone else beside the missionary had evidently been in the cave. There were the signs of a struggle all about the fire. The earth was torn up in several places. Some of the brands, too, were scattered.

"Oh!" said Juan, almost wringing his hands in his trouble, "I am afraid those wicked men have found out where Mr. Morris was, and have come and done something dreadful to him! Why did I leave him?"

Just at this moment he felt a pull at his shirt sleeve. He glanced up in alarm. Then Juan gave utterance to a cry that went ringing through and through the cave!

CHAPTER IV.

CHONITA.

CHONITA! Chonita!" cried Juan. "Oh, my dear, dear Chonita! Is it really you?"

He threw his arms around her neck in

little nose down against his face, caressing it again and again. For it was none other than Chonita who had pulled at his sleeve.

"Well," said a familiar voice at that moment, "I see the surprise has been all that I planned it to be, though the donkey herself came very near spoiling it at one time. It was all I could do to hold her the moment she heard your voice, and I had to place my hand firmly over her nose to keep her from whinnying."

Turning, Juan saw the missionary standing close behind him and smiling down into his face.

"Oh, how did you get her?" the boy cried almost breathlessly.

"She came herself. It was not very long after you had gone, only a few hours, just as the sun had begun to shine along the walls. I was lying here trying to read by the light that came in, when I was attracted by a noise near the outer entrance. I went to the opening, and peered down the passage. There was a shaking of the bushes at the other end, and the next moment a pair of long ears and a head came through, then a whole body, and this little lady here stood erect upon her feet. I was sure it was she the moment I saw the queer black spot on her cheek of which you had told me.

"I was afraid I might frighten her if she saw me at first, so I withdrew into the cave, and there awaited developments.

She was evidently in search of you, and doubtless expected to find you here. When she did not, she showed her disappointment very plainly. She was turning to go away when I realized that I must detain her, that it would be your wish for me to do so. You can see by the ground what a struggle we had, though I did everything I could to keep from being rough with her. After a while she seemed to understand me, and made no further resistance as I led her to the rear of the cave. There I found you had made provision for securing her."

Juan could hardly believe that he had his dear Chonita once more. Then came the sadness to mingle with his joy. Had he found her but to give her up again?

The missionary seemed to divine his thoughts. He leaned over the boy, placed his hand on his shoulder, and said:

"Juan, that debt your father made was not a just debt; it was anything else, my lad, and no one but a wicked man would have accepted it and required its payment. Unless the Señor Miguel comes back and makes more trouble, which he is not likely to do about only one burro, keep your dear Chonita, Juan. You will need her to ride back and forth to the mine. It will give you more strength for your work than if you had to toil up and down the mountains at the expense of your own muscle."

Juan gave the missionary a grateful look. So it was not wrong after all to

keep Chonita, his dear Chonita, who had come back to him in this wonderful way, a way of which only Chonita would have thought.

Juan slept with the missionary that night. The sun had been up a couple of hours or more ere he started back to his home. There was so much of which they had to talk. Mr. Morris took Juan into many of his plans, and there was Juan's future, too, to be discussed.

"I like this cave," the missionary said to Juan. "It is just the place I need when journeying back and forth over the mountains. Here I can stop, and rest, and read, and commune with Him who is to help me in all my undertakings. I suppose, Juan," he continued, with a smile, "there will be no objection to taking another partner into possession of the cave?"

"Not if the partner is yourself, Mr. Morris," said Juan, returning the smile. "Oh, I'll be so glad for you to have it, and to use it as much as you please."

"I will leave one of my blankets," added Mr. Morris, "and some of my books."

"And I will have my sister come and weave for you a nice, clean, fresh mat," said Juan. "We already have the straw near by. Then, before I go, I will show you where the water is to be found and the hatchet with which to cut the mesquite wood. Matches are always in the little closet in the wall, and the corn-meal with which to make the cakes, and a can-

dle or two. If there is no meat when you come, go out and search for a kid, and kill it. If it is mine, you will know it by the mark of which I told you; if it is not, why, then, we can pay for it."

Juan felt very rich now that he was going to work in the mine, and at twelve dollars a month!

"Why, Juan," said the missionary, "I shall live like a king."

"Oh, no," said Juan, "I guess not—not if you failed to find the kid, and the corn-meal had been here so long it had grown musty."

"But there would still be the tortillas already cooked," said the missionary philosophically, and by this Juan knew that he had learned the lesson so hard for many to learn, that of being content with any lot.

"Juan," said the missionary as he saw the boy was getting ready to start, "I would like to pray with you before you go. A little talk with Jesus will perhaps help us to feel nearer him."

Juan knelt as the missionary told him, but it was with some trembling. What would his mother or the priest say? It was all very strange! And to whom was the missionary talking? Was it to another person? Juan could see no one. He was talking, too, about him, Juan. What was it he was saying? The boy could hardly tell, his thoughts were in such a commotion. But Juan resolved that he would ask.

"Señor," he said hesitantly, "who was that to whom you were talking and about me?"

"To God, Juan, and I was asking him to keep you a good boy always and to let you know the truth."

"What truth, Señor?"

The missionary rested his hand gently on the lad's head. "The truth that will make you happy and at peace all your life long," he said. "My boy, I was praying our dear Jesus to draw you to himself. He is closer to you now than I am, if you can only see it so. His spirit is here not less than if his body were with it. Is that hard to understand, Juan? Try to see him more clearly, dear boy. He is all good, all loving. When you understand something of what he is like, you will want to be like him a little, too. And we believe that we may one day be altogether like him. The Bible says 'we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'"

Juan wrinkled his brow in a perplexed way for a moment, then he grasped the missionary's hand, and said good-by.

A moment later he put his arm around Chonita's neck, and, calling to her softly, started from the cave.

As he did so, the missionary said to him, "Juan, be sure to send that little sister of yours again to see me; to-day if you can. I must go away to-morrow evening."

"Yes, she will come, Señor," he replied,

turning round. "I was going to tell her. But there will be no need to tell. She will come as long as she knows you are here," and Juan looked at him with an expression the missionary understood.

"But I fear it is hard for her coming over the mountain."

"Oh, Paulina is used to that, Señor. She helps me many times all day long with the goats."

How glad they all were to see Chonita! Even the old mother gave her a pat and a caress. Paulina said right away she must have a stick of sugar, and forthwith proceeded to give her the only piece that was in the house. Juanilita donated a part of the flower wreath she had worn at the Virgin's Festival, and with this Chonita was at once decorated. She marched about the yard proudly. Such a knowing and happy Chonita!

Juan found that his mother had now heard something of the disturbance at the warehouse, but as it had been through a friend, her uneasiness had evidently not been aroused to any extent. He told her as much as he thought he could safely.

"He was in danger, *mamia mia*" (my mamma), "the good Mr. Morris, who was already kind to me when I met him in Chihuahua. I could not let them hurt him so. I showed him how to get through the warehouse, and to a place where he was safe."

Juan was up before daybreak that Monday morning, and ere they could barely

see to pick their way, he and Chonita had started on the journey to the mines. Perhaps it was a little too soon, but Juan felt that he could not risk the least chance of being late that morning of all mornings.

When Juan arrived the shaft had not been opened, but the engineer was in his place. He was a young man from Chihuahua whom Juan knew very well.

He began to tease Juan unmercifully about Chonita. Where had he procured that ancient old lady with the great patch of black plaster on her jaw? Had she but recently returned from the court of the King of Spain? If so, then the mines were assuredly no place for such a patrician.

"Don't mind him, Chonita," Juan said entreatingly as he went to fasten her for the day. "After a while when he learns what a truly lovely and wonderful donkey thou art, then he will be ashamed of his words."

Chonita moved her head knowingly, as much as to say that she understood perfectly and would take his advice.

Juan picketed her so that she could graze for several feet around the stake. It was by no means fine picking. Indeed, it was such as respectable donkeys in this country would turn up their noses at; but Chonita was a Mexican donkey, and used to making her dinner all the year round on nothing better than mesquite and thistles. But here there were

some tufts of grass. Around these Chonita grazed carefully for a while, then nipped at them daintily by way of dessert.

Every day the first thing Juan did after he arrived was to go and picket Chonita, in just the very best place he could procure. In order to find these spots he had gradually to go further and further away from the mines.

Juan was put to work tending one of the little trains of cars that ran from where the ore was being dug to the bottom of the shaft. There it was deposited in the carriages and sent up. It was rather hard work at first, as he had a good deal of pushing and running to do, but after a while he grew used to it, and often whistled cheerily while he was at his work.

Juan wondered what made the men grumble and complain so. The most of them were getting more than he was, yet they seemed so out of sorts, so dissatisfied, and were often talking mysteriously of "strikes" and "higher wages" and "the rights of the people." However, they generally stopped speaking about it when they saw him approach.

Some of the men in the mines had kindly faces, but the most of them were decidedly hard-looking characters. Now and then one of them swore at Juan in such a way that the blood tingled in his veins. But he managed to keep patient and to make no reply. He knew this was

best. A retort on his part might lead to something even worse than words. Occasionally, Mr. Caldwell noticed him and spoke to him pleasantly. Once he had come down into the mines and stood for a few minutes in the passage where Juan was at work, watching him, but he knew it was not with unkindly eyes.

The men ascended from their work exactly at six o'clock in the evening; on Saturday it was five o'clock. As they came up in the carriage, six at a time, they were each searched to see that they had concealed no ore about their clothing or persons. Even their hair was searched. But Juan knew, despite the show of rigor made, that this examination was not always carefully and closely performed by those who had it in charge. Some of the men managed to get through with ore. Juan knew of several instances, but he kept silent. At first he longed to tell Mr. Caldwell, for the superintendent had been kind to him, but there was something that told him how great would be the danger should he turn informant. These men were such desperate characters. He had his mother and sisters to think of as well as himself. If he were taken from them, or if even he were driven from his place, what would they do?

He continued to ride Chonita back and forth, except a day now and then, when he left her at home to rest. The picking-ground was now considerably removed from the mine. He had always to allow

himself some little extra time to go and come.

"My sweet Chonita," he would say, "I do not like this. You are too far away. But what better can I do without letting you suffer? There may be suspicious fully, closely. There was no Chonita! There were the stake and the rope, but — Chonita was gone! Yes, she was actually gone. He uttered a sharp cry, then began to call:

"Chonita! Chonita! Chonita!"



They were carefully searched.—See page 24.

characters prowling around. If I were to lose you again, how could I bear it?"

In not many days thereafter he was to know how he could bear it. His day's work done, Juan went as usual for Chonita. As he crossed the ridge he did not see her. He grew uneasy, then alarmed, but the thought came that maybe she was behind a clump of the mesquite. He hastened forward. He looked about care-

If Chonita were anywhere within sound of that voice, she would surely come. But again and again the call was repeated, and no Chonita came.

"Perhaps she has gnawed the rope and gone home," Juan said, but even as he spoke he felt this could not be. It was not at all like Chonita, and what was not like Chonita she never did.

Juan examined the rope, then he sprang

to his feet with a sharp exclamation. The rope had been cut! and so smoothly it could have been with nothing else but a knife. Yes, it was all very clear now! Chonita had been taken!

CHAPTER V.

TROUBLE.



OOR Juan! His heart was sore over the loss of Chonita. Who could have taken her? Whoever it was, he knew they must have used force, for Chonita would never have gone of herself.

It was dreary going back and forth to the mines without Chonita. She had been such an appreciative companion, always seeming to understand what he said, flicking her long ears to and fro vigorously whenever anything was spoken that particularly pleased her. Juan did all he could to recover her, making inquiries in every direction, and searching for her himself whenever he got the chance. But it was small opportunity for the latter that he had, since the work at the mines kept him so close. There came a time when Juan longed for Chonita more than ever; when he would have given almost anything he could to have her sympathetic ears into which to pour his tale of trouble.

One morning, Juan heard Mr. Caldwell tell one of the inspectors that there must be a more rigid search of the men as they came up from their work. Someone was taking the ore, and it must be some one who came up through the main shaft. The thief must have secret pockets in his clothes. Doubtless there was more than one thief. It seemed so from present indications.

Among other acquaintances at the mine Juan had formed that of a man named Leon Senverado. He was a middle-aged man, and lived at Santa Eulalia. Juan had seen him there several times, but had never spoken to him before coming to the mine. Knowing what the managers thought of the Santa Eulalia population, Juan wondered how it was this man had ever been given employment. After an insight into his character, however, he felt sure it was through his deception. He had concealed the fact that he lived in Santa Eulalia.

Leon seemed determined to make a chum and companion of Juan, despite the great difference in their ages. Whenever he could, he came where the boy was at work, and always had something to say to him. Juan felt shy of him from the first, and could never get over an uneasy feeling while in his presence. Still he always tried to treat him politely, and to listen patiently to him while he was talking.

One evening, just as they were about to

step upon the carriage, Juan felt sure that Leon had some ore in his pockets or concealed about his person. He wondered why the examiner did not find it, but this was before those positive words of Mr. Caldwell with reference to a closer search. Again and again Juan felt sure Leon had the ore about him, and there was another man, too, whom the boy suspected.

It was the day following Mr. Caldwell's direction. As six of them came to the top in the carriage, the examiner said, "Men, I am sorry, but there has to be a closer search than any we have yet had. Mr. Caldwell directs it. Every one of you must go into the shed, there, and not only have your clothes searched, but they must be removed for the search."

Some of the men looked surprised; one or two wholly indignant.

"This is an outrage!" said a voice, and on looking up, Juan saw that it was Leon who had spoken. He seemed really angry, but the examiner paid no attention to him.

As they were going to the shed Leon walked very close to Juan, even having his arm around him at one time. They reached the shed. Juan took off his pantaloons. They seemed strangely heavy.

"I wouldn't have thought it of you!" said the examiner, who, having held them upside down and shaken them, was now pointing to the ore where it had rolled upon the floor.

Juan was overwhelmed. "Oh, please, Mr. Ellis!" he cried, his voice trembling so he could barely make the words audible, "I did not know it was there, for I did not put it there, believe me."

"A very likely story!" said Mr. Ellis sarcastically.

Juan felt as though he could sink through the floor. How did that ore come in his pocket? As he stood there trembling and overcome, his eyes suddenly encountered those of Leon Senvorado. He shifted his gaze from Juan's almost instantly, but Juan had seen enough to convince him that it was Leon who had placed the ore in his pocket.

But Leon had not succeeded in transferring all his ore. There had been enough left upon his own person to convict him. There was a third man, too, found with ore. This was Manuel Travinè, the one Juan had for some time suspected.

When the three were brought before Mr. Caldwell his astonishment was indeed great to find one of them Juan — Juan, the boy who had come so well recommended to him by his friend, Mr. Morris; Juan, who had made so fine a record for faithfulness and industry ever since he had been in the mine.

Mr. Caldwell showed his surprise in such a way that it almost broke Juan's heart. Weeping, the boy told his tale. He was innocent, he declared; he did not know how the ore had come in his pocket;

he was as astonished as the examiner when it had been found there. He dared not arouse Leon. He was afraid of the man. He would do him some further injury, he knew. Therefore he kept silent as to what he suspected.

Something in the boy's manner and his words won Mr. Caldwell. He could not believe him guilty. He had no appearance of guilt. Then, too, an inkling of the real state of the case began to dawn upon the superintendent.

"Juan," he said, "I will not discharge you this time. I will give you one more trial. But remember it will be the last. Should anything of a similar nature occur, you can expect no further leniency from me. So that you see your place in the mines for the future depends upon your own good behavior."

Though he had been reinstated, yet Juan felt miserable, dejected, ashamed, for he had been accused, accused of a theft, and there were others who knew it besides the examiner and Mr. Caldwell. It seemed to him he could never look any of them in the face again.

He did not tell his mother or sisters—he could not. He would not so pain their hearts, for he knew they would grieve with him over the shame of it all.

But his mother noticed his troubled face, his dejected air. She knew something was wrong.

"What troubles thee, my little Juan?" she said to him one day, putting her arm

caressingly about him. "Tell the madre, Juanito."

"There is really nothing, madre mia," he said evasively, "at least nothing that could be called trouble. It isn't always pleasant at the mines. There are some of the men who are very wicked," and Juan sighed.

"Poor child!" said his mother tenderly and pityingly, as she stroked his hair. "I fear the long walk and the hard work in the mines is more than my Juanito can stand. Oh, the pity of it, that the dear, good Chonita was taken! Now it is all the harder for thee, Juan, all the harder."

"Do not worry about me, little mother," said Juan, returning the caress. "I often get a lift from the others with their burros, and now and then I ride on the tram. But it would be ever so much better, I confess, if only I had my dear, sweet Chonita!" and he sighed.

Things were getting worse and worse at the mines. The ore was being stolen in quantities.

"The thieves surely have some other way of entering the mine," said Mr. Caldwell, "some way of which we do not know—a secret entrance, in fact. It is doubtless around on the other side of the mountain, and is probably through the tunnel of one of the old Spanish excavations. I thought we had effectually closed them all, though from present indications it seems not."

"What makes you think the mine is

being robbed in this way?" asked Mr. Ellis.

"Because I know much ore is being carried to Santa Eulalia. I had occasion to go there yesterday, my principal purpose being to look after a couple of sick miners, but I had my eyes open as to other things. I managed to visit three of the smelting furnaces. I was completely surprised at the amount of ore I saw. It could not be loose ore, picked up here and there, as they claim, or even obtained through their rude system of mining. It is surely ore from underground, and from a deep vein at that."

Every morning when Juan arrived at the mine, the first thing he did was to buckle on his leather belt and stick his pick into it. Then, putting on his miner's hat, with his lamp attached, he would step into the carriage, and was ready to descend down, down hundreds of feet into the earth. At first it made him shudder to go down, they went so rapidly, and there was such a terrible silence and darkness below him, but he soon got used to it.

This morning, as he was about to descend into the mine, Mr. Caldwell came forward to speak to him. One of the miners was sick, and the superintendent wanted Juan to take his place. It was in a distant part of the mine, in which Juan had never yet been.

Juan felt pleased that Mr. Caldwell had spoken so kindly to him and desired him

to go and take the place of the miner. It showed that he still had trust in him. It warmed the poor boy's heart, for he had been sadly cast down ever since the discovery of the ore in his pockets and the accusation he had been called to face. Although Mr. Caldwell had appeared not to believe the charge against him, yet the disgrace to a certain extent remained, or at least Juan so felt, and the poor fellow was grievously troubled. How he longed for a talk with the missionary! He would know just what to say, what to do to make things right again. He had been to the cave once since, and although Juan had not seen him, he knew he had been there from certain indications. How gentle and good he was, and what sweet, comforting words he could say! Words so different from any Juan had ever heard before. This was such a new, such a beautiful thought, the having Jesus always with one, and being able to talk to him and find comfort in him all the day long.

This morning, when Mr. Caldwell spoke so kindly to him, Juan felt happier than he had for weeks. Oh, if the time would only come when he could prove his innocence, when the least shadow of suspicion would be removed! In his broodings Juan magnified the trouble that had taken place, and the impression it had made, at least so far as Mr. Caldwell was concerned. There might be some that believed the boy guilty, but certainly not

the Superintendent. If he had thought so, he would not have reinstated him.

It was a new squad with whom Juan went to work that morning. He found the most of the men rather surly, and not inclined to talk. It seemed that some of them realized the suspicions that hung over those in the mines, especially now since the rules of examination had become so rigid.

Juan was always interested in his work, more so than ever now that he had become a regular miner. There was a fascination in picking out the glittering bits of ore. He had been sent this morning to work in a vein that was particularly rich and deep, the very finest and richest they had yet struck, one of the men grew companionable enough to tell him.

At noon they stopped an hour to eat their lunch, assembling in a small, chamber-like excavation, where water was kept, and also a supply of oil. Juan ate his lunch of corn-cakes and goat's meat with great relish. He replenished his lamp and filled the little can of water slung from his shoulders.

The long hours of the afternoon wore on, but they did not seem so long to Juan. He kept going further and further, till at length he found himself entirely alone. The voices of the men, speaking now and then to each other, grew fainter and fainter; finally they ceased altogether. But Juan did not notice this. He was too busy with his thoughts. He won-

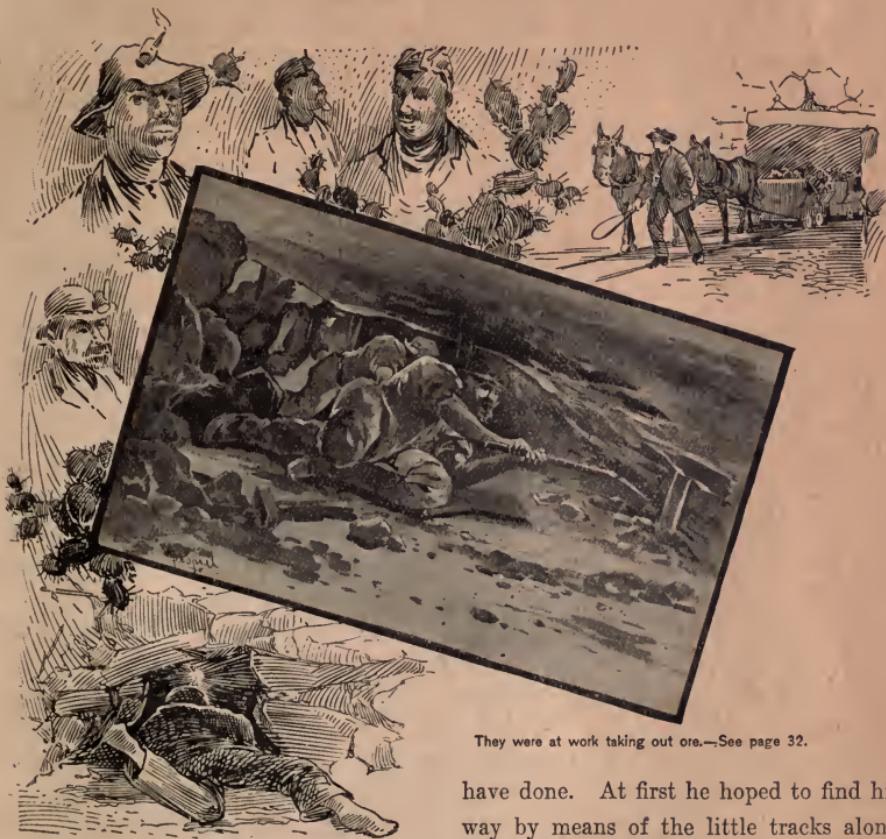
dered when the missionary would come again. How beautiful were some of the things in the little book he had given Paulina! But there were statements, too, they did not understand. If only the missionary would come and explain them!

Then Juan thought of Chonita. Ah, dear Chonita! Where was she now? If he could but see her, could but put his arms once more around her neck, and feel the rough little nose against his face! How that nose would tickle him, and play hide-and-seek from cheek to cheek! Could there be another burro anywhere like Chonita? Who had been so cruel as to take her?

Suddenly, a sharp, keen whistle sounded through the passage, followed by a peculiar call. Juan raised his head to listen, but as it was not repeated, he went on with his work. Some of the men were communicating with each other, he thought. It never occurred to him that this was the signal to quit work for the day and leave the mines. Each squad had its own system of signals. Unfortunately, the miner in charge of this squad had failed to notify Juan.

Juan had nothing by which to tell the time. He did not therefore know how many hours he had been at work. But soon increasing weariness told him he had been in the mine a long time. His shoulders and elbows ached, and his knees were beginning to pain him and to grow stiff. It must be time to stop. He

slung his pick in his belt and started to way to the mouth of the shaft? He was find his companions. He felt sure he not quite sure. He had been careless knew the way. He reached the spot when he entered that morning, and had where he had left the men at work. They not taken his bearings as he ought to



They were at work taking out ore.—See page 32.

were not there. They must have stopped for the day. He called, but there was no answer. Doubtless they were gathered about the mouth of the shaft awaiting their turn to go up. Did Juan know the

have done. At first he hoped to find his way by means of the little tracks along which the ore-cars ran. But there seemed to be a number of these, going in various directions. Doubtless the whole mine was threaded with them. At last Juan had to give up in despair. A dreadful thought presented itself: the

men had assuredly quit work for the day. He had been forgotten and left alone in the mine. He must find the passage to the main shaft.

With a brave heart he resumed his search. Rougher and more interminable grew the way. Once or twice he came near slipping. Holding his little lamp over, he saw the danger he had escaped. One false step, and he would have gone plunging down into what seemed a bottomless abyss.

He was now not only very tired, but exceedingly hungry. In the wide pocket of his overalls were the remains of his lunch. He stopped, sat down, and, leaning against a ledge, eagerly devoured every crumb. He got up again and went on. He wandered about an hour or more, then, as he was on the point of giving up in complete despair, he heard a noise that almost caused his heart to stand still. Yes, there it was again, the sound of a pick striking in the soil! And yet another and another! Added to these sounds came that of voices speaking cautiously.

Juan's heart began to beat rapidly. Could it be that the morning had come and the miners had returned to their work? He did not believe this possible. While the time had indeed been long and dreary to him in his fear and loneliness, still he felt it had not been sufficient to bring another day.

Some sudden feeling of caution caused

Juan to move slowly and carefully. He would get a look at the men before he revealed himself to them. They must have a light or lights, he felt assured. They could not work without them. As he had not yet caught sight of these, he knew the men must be around a ledge of the rock. They could not be so very far away, for he could plainly hear their voices and the sound of the picks.

Taking off his miner's hat with its lighted lamp, he concealed it behind him, and feeling his way cautiously by means of the wall of rock, he advanced until he could peer around the ledge. He came very near uttering a startled cry at what he saw.

On the other side of the ledge, and not more than fifteen paces away, three men were busy at work taking out ore, and Juan knew at once from their appearance that they did not belong to the mines. They were rough-looking characters, and in the belts at their waists pistols were hung.

Not far from where the men were working, and in a little cluster, five burros were standing. Juan could see them very well as the rays from the miners' lamps encircled them. Something about one of the burros seemed strangely familiar to Juan. There! what a quaint little flicker of the ear! — a real coquettish flicker, by the way — and now the burro was moving around. The long ears came up, the face was turned, while the head rested very

complacently over the back of another burro. Now, indeed, Juan gave utterance to a cry, though he had presence of mind to so check it that it died but faintly upon his lips. Well might he be astonished. The donkey was Chonita!

CHAPTER VI.

AGAIN CHONITA.



WAS unfortunate Juan had uttered that cry, though it had been repressed. For the men evidently heard it, though not distinctly.

"What was that, Edmundo?" asked one of them, glancing up suddenly.

"I don't know," the man replied, looking perplexed. "It was a noise of some kind, but it may have been an owl clucking to himself as he slept. There are a few of them in the mine, you know, especially in this part of it."

As he spoke, Edmundo took a step forward as though to investigate. Juan's heart stood in his throat. Well he knew what would be his fate if he were discovered by these desperate men.

But Edmundo appeared to change his mind, and contented himself with flashing his light along the passage.

"It was an owl, Carlos, I feel sure," he said.

Juan breathed more freely.

"Well, we'll have to be careful," returned the one addressed as Carlos. "If any of the owners of the mine were to find us here, there certainly would be hot times."

"I hear they are growing suspicious again, and are going to set extra watches around the mine," said the third man, whom Juan afterward heard addressed as Manuel, though it was not the same Manuel who had been dismissed for ore-stealing.

"Well, I don't believe they'll find our entrance place," declared Carlos. "Our ancestors, the Spaniards, were shrewd fellows. Who would ever think, now, of looking for the entrance at the bottom of the cañon?"

"But the same way we stumbled upon it, some one else may," said Edmundo.

"But no one else, I feel assured, knows how to enter the cañon."

Thus they continued to talk, and Juan sat listening, trembling and afraid, it must be confessed, yet determined to hear all he could. There was no longer any doubt as to who the men were. They had told it themselves. They were the thieves who were taking the ore from the mines, the thieves about whom Mr. Caldwell and the mine owners were so disturbed and for whom a reward had been offered.

Juan was a brave boy, yet here was a situation that would have appalled a heart even braver than his. He wanted to re-

main, watching the men, and to find out about the secret entrance, but he feared the consequences. Suppose they should detect him; what would become of him? On the other hand, if he attempted to retreat, to make his escape, might he not also be discovered? There were so many loose pieces of ore about, and he was so wedged against the angle, having found a slight excavation into which he had fitted himself, that he feared that in turning round he would dislodge particles of the rock with a noise that would at once attract the attention of the men. Besides, Juan was burning with the desire to find that secret entrance. Of all things this was now uppermost in his mind. Oh, what a great thing it would be if he could find it and show it to Mr. Caldwell!

Juan gave utterance in his heart to a fervent prayer. If the missionary could only have heard him! He bowed his head, gently, reverently, and prayed. If only the dear Jesus would help him now! The wonder and the gladness were that Juan had come so far into the light in so short a time. Yes, Jesus would surely help him.

The hours wore on. Juan grew weary and stiff in his cramped position, for he had long since drawn himself to a sitting posture. Once or twice he dozed off, but he soon awakened again.

At last, to his great joy, he saw the men making preparations to start. The picks were slung in their belts and the ore

loaded on the burros. This was one of the hardest things for Juan to see. His own sweet Chonita! to think of her having come to this. His own Chonita helping the men carry their stolen ore!

Juan felt sure she must know it — what was there that Chonita didn't know? — and feel it. Yes, Chonita did know. Juan could tell by the way she looked when the man went to load her with ore. How ashamed and reluctant she seemed! And, after the stolen ore was placed on her back, she never held her head up again, but kept it hung down dejectedly.

Juan's heart was on fire. He came near forgetting himself and rushing forward. Another purpose had now formed within him, in addition to that of following the men to the secret entrance. This purpose was the rescue of Chonita, who had been gone so long, and whom he had missed with all his heart.

Juan waited until the little twinkling lights carried by the miners were some distance away, then he, too, started, picking his way cautiously, and taking care to keep his own light concealed behind him.

The trail seemed to ascend at every step. It was certainly laborious work for the poor burros laden with the ore. Juan thought of Chonita, and his heart swelled. If only he could get her now! But he knew it was not the time. He must know about that entrance first. He went on, telling Jesus about it as he went.

Surely Jesus would help him in the best way.

Once or twice Juan got nearer the men than he desired. The heavily laden burros caused them to go quite slowly. At one time he came very close to discovery. He was not more than fifteen or twenty paces behind the men, when he saw one stop suddenly, and glance backward.

"I thought I saw a light that was not ours," Juan heard him say.

In an instant it came to Juan that he had been careless with his lamp, and that a ray from it had doubtless shone ahead on the path.

The man, who was called Carlos, appeared to consult with the others a moment, then he and Edmundo started back. Juan thought he was surely lost now. But the words next spoken by Carlos gave him a glimmer of hope.

"Let us leave our own lights," he said. "If there is another, we can see it all the better."

Quickly, Juan took a resolution. He would extinguish his lamp. It was certainly a perilous thing to do, for, should he lose sight of the miners, he would doubtless become hopelessly lost in the mines, as, through some carelessness, he had not a match with him. But he reached behind and turned the flame off with a steady hand. Then he hugged the wall closely and waited and prayed. Yes, again Juan prayed.

The men came on steadily. They were

now almost upon him. Juan scarcely dared to breathe. Suddenly, when they were so near he could almost have reached out and touched them, they stopped.

"I guess I was mistaken," Carlos said, "but I made sure I saw a glimmer. At any rate, I don't care to go further without a light."

"Neither do I," replied Edmundo. "There are pits, and not far away. I shouldn't fancy tumbling into one of them."

With this they returned, and Juan, breathing more easily, and with his heart filled with thankfulness, cautiously followed. He had now no light and must not lose sight of the men. But at one time he did, and was almost beside himself with fear.

Suddenly and without warning, every light disappeared. Juan almost gave expression to his alarm in a sharp cry, but checked himself in time. His first impulse was to rush forward, seeking the men. But he knew this would not do. He might stumble and fall, making a noise, and thus be discovered. He could still hear a sound now and then, which convinced him that the men could not be a great distance away. They must have turned the angle of a ledge. This was Juan's first thought, but after he had toiled on for some moments, and still had not come in sight of the men, he did not know what to think. The mystery was all the more perplexing as he could still

hear the voices of the men as they addressed each other or spoke to the donkeys.

By degrees a dim gray light began to steal into the passage, a light just sufficient to be perceptible, but not enough of a light to show objects clearly. Soon Juan realized what it was—they were nearing the opening, and the men had doubtless extinguished their lights. He prayed again, and even more fervently, for now the time had come.

Juan pulled himself together for supreme action. Yes, now of all times he must rescue Chonita! If he did not get her away from the men before the opening was reached, there would be no chance, as he dared not show himself either near or beyond the opening until the men were gone. But how was he to manage it?

It was a blessing that Chonita was so obedient a donkey. Yes, obedience can be a blessing to a donkey as well as to a child. Never yet had Chonita failed to respond to the call of her young master. Never mind where she was or what she was doing, she would leave all when she heard that peculiar sound, half a bird-call, half a whistle.

Juan knew he had only to utter that call now, and Chonita would come, would turn immediately from the file of donkeys to hunt for him joyously in the dark. But what danger there would be to utter it! Others would hear it besides Chonita.

And how was Chonita to turn back and come to him without being discovered?

When Juan had last seen the men and donkeys distinctly, two of the men, Carlos and Edmundo, were walking in front. Before them were two of the donkeys; behind them were three. Following all came Manuel driving the latter. In this file of three donkeys was Chonita, with depressed ears and bowed head. Now, Juan could only see all as a moving mass of shadows; nothing was distinct, but he supposed the file was moving with men and donkeys in the position he had last seen them.

Juan grew desperate. He must rescue Chonita. It was now or never! Much depended upon Chonita herself—the way in which she left the file. But then, Chonita was always so knowing! Perhaps she would understand even now. He would make the venture, and if they were discovered—well, he would make as brave a fight of it as he could, and there might be a chance for him and Chonita to escape in the shadows. And Jesus was with them, whatever happened, so why should he feel afraid. The missionary had said so, and the missionary knew.

Juan threw his head back, and gave softly, cautiously, the call Chonita knew so well. Her ears were keen, even though they were hung down so dejectedly now in her shame. Chonita's would hear what other ears would not.

Juan strained his eyes through the could Chonita possibly get away without darkness and again he repeated the cry. being discovered?

It sounded as the note of a bird aroused As Juan strained his eyes through the from sleep. There were night birds near semi-darkness, he felt sure he saw a slight



His eyes fairly pierced Juan.—See page 39.

this entrance to the cave. Juan had felt the current of air stirred by their wings as one or two had gone rushing past him. After all, if heard, the cry might attract no attention from the men. But Chonita? Ah, that was the trouble. How

change in the outlines of the moving file before him. It seemed to broaden out near the center, then a shadow appeared moving backward instead of forward. In a moment or two more Juan had his arms around Chonita's neck, while Chonita's

long ears were flapping back and forth across his face, and Chonita's tongue and nose giving vigorous bath to his cheeks.

At sound of the call the intelligent creature had swerved suddenly from the line, leaving it to close up again, and had gone flitting by Manuel like a shadow. Or it may have been that the man was asleep, dozing after his long, tiresome work in the mine. It afterward proved that such was the case. They were all tired and half asleep; by no means on the alert, or Juan would not have found it so easy. As it was now, the file moved on, the men not knowing what had happened. But they would doubtless find out when they reached the opening.

Juan put his arm over Chonita and cautiously drew her behind a ledge of rock and into the shadow. They had not stood there long when he heard the men coming back. Chonita's absence had been discovered, and they were evidently very wrathy. They had left the other donkeys secured by their ropes near the entrance, and all three of the men had come back to aid in the search for Chonita.

"The abominable donkey!" one of them said. "She always was contrary and hard to manage, never wanting to do what you told her."

Juan was indignant at this. He gave Chonita a reassuring hug. Chonita herself pricked up her ears as though she understood every word.

Juan could hear them hunting about

in every direction. Fortunately, they did not come very near the ledge, where he stood concealed with the object of their search.

"I think we are very foolish to come back here and waste this time," Manuel said suddenly. "The donkey may have gone ahead; indeed, I believe she has. It would be more reasonable to suppose this than that she had turned around and come back into the mine. It is more likely that, being hungry, she hurried on home. I'll confess to having been asleep," he said candidly, "or at least dozing, and I believe the rest of you were too."

They did not deny it.

"I often sleep half the way back after the hard work of getting the ore," continued Manuel; and still there was no protest from the others as to their having done otherwise.

Juan waited for at least a half hour. He would let them get well out of the way ere he and Chonita ventured forth. And how happy he was now that they had escaped! The prayers had been heard.

He cautiously approached the opening and peered out. There was no one in sight. He went still further. Now he stood where his eyes could reach up to the mountain peaks. The new day had broken, and the sun was beginning to pour his shower of gold over the lower crags. In a little while more his broad, beaming face would show above the

higher peaks. They were just getting ready to go to work in the mines. Juan wondered if they had missed him yet, and what they would think.

As he gazed more closely, a sudden exclamation escaped him. Why, the peak directly in front of him was his own loved Sierra Colonial! The cañon then was at its base. No one knew the entrance to it? How mistaken were those men! Juan knew it as well as they. How many times had he found pickings for his burros here! The mesquite was the best in the mountains. The burros always wrinkled their noses with anticipation and sniffed delightedly when they saw it.

Should Juan take the ore from Chonita's back? He thought at first he would. Then he took a second resolution. He knew it was very valuable. If left here, the men would return and get it. He would carry it home and notify Mr. Caldwell. His home was not so very far away, only across the mountain peak, and there was a path Juan knew well.

He returned for Chonita and started, making his way out of the cañon without trouble. He was two-thirds of the distance up the mountain, when suddenly coming to an angle — the place where two paths crossed — Juan, who for the moment had his head down, almost stumbled upon a man who was standing there, holding a mule by the bridle.

It was Mr. Caldwell. He gave a searching glance at Juan; then, approach-

ing Chonita, looked down into the baskets she carried, one on either side. His eyes fairly pierced Juan as he turned around again.

"I never would have believed it!" he said sternly, addressing him, "if I had not myself seen it!"

CHAPTER VII.

"ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER."



S Mr. Caldwell spoke the words, Juan looked at him a m a z e d , dumfounded. What could t h e superintendent mean? and why did he speak in this sharp, stern way?

Juan's lips trembled, and his eyes began to grow misty as he asked the questions:

"Señor, what is the matter? What can you mean?"

"Do not feign ignorance," said the superintendent sternly. "It is bad enough as it is, without your adding further to your sin by falsehood."

Juan's eyes showed the tears plainly now. He was not only perplexed, astonished, but he was hurt to the core.

"Señor, I am lost. All is in the dark to me. I cannot understand."

"Cannot understand? What could be plainer? You are lost in the mines — or apparently so," he added with a little

curve of the lip. "Your absence is not discovered, however, until all the men are up. Two volunteer to return and search for you. They go along all the passages you would be likely to traverse in reaching the main shaft, and even beyond these. There is no sign of you. Others join the party, and the search is kept up over half the night. Only exhaustion and the feeling that they must get some sleep for to-day's work force the men to quit at last. At daylight I start for your home to make inquiries, thinking that perhaps you may have come up without anyone noting it particularly. Now, what do I find? Instead of the boy quietly at home, or on his way to the mines, or, at worst, a household sorely upset and disturbed, here I come upon him crossing the mountains at this early hour of the morning, coming up from the gorge, from the very direction of the mines, leading a donkey, on the donkey baskets, and in the baskets —ore! Do you want me to use plainer words, Juan, or have I made my meaning clear enough?"

It came to Juan like a flash. He saw it plainly now. Mr. Caldwell believed he had stolen the ore! It was a compromising position, he would admit. But surely he could explain. He would tell how he came by the ore. Then Mr. Caldwell would believe him, and would not only believe him, but would be so glad the thieves had been discovered, he would thank him.

"Señor," he began, "I—"

Mr. Caldwell stopped him with an impatient gesture.

"There is no need for words," he said. "The deed is evident; the situation clear. They speak for themselves."

"But, Señor, let me explain. Do hear—"

"There is no need, I tell you!" said Mr. Caldwell more sharply than ever. "Why should I listen to your explanations and excuses? You will doubtless try to smooth it over as you did the other. These are proof enough," pointing to the baskets of ore, "and I shall let my heart have nothing to do with the matter this time. My eyes have seen, therefore head and not heart shall render decision. You are dismissed from the mine, not for a week nor a month, but for all time, understand. Be thankful that I let you off so easily. I could deal severely with you through the law. I will borrow your burro for a day," he continued. "When she has been unloaded at the mine, I will rest her, then turn her loose, and no doubt she will find her way home. Good-by, Juan," he concluded, and now he spoke sadly. "I never knew so likely a boy to prove so treacherous, so deceptive."

He put Chonita in the path before him, mounted his mule, and started in the direction of the mines, leaving Juan standing where the trails crossed, his face pale and set, his body almost without the power of movement.

How Juan reached home he never mother," he said caressingly. "I have knew. It seemed an age ere he stood in been out all night, and am very tired." the doorway. His mother's eyes were the Not yet could he harrow her by telling



"There is nothing to alarm thee, mother."

first to see him. Oh, how quick a mother's eyes are!

"Juanito! Juanito!" she cried. "What aileth thee, my dear one?"

"There is nothing to alarm thee,

her of the awful trouble that had come. His mother was of an excitable temperament, and he realized the necessity of waiting until he had grown calmer and could state things more clearly.

"Juan," she returned, putting her arm around him, and drawing him towards her, "they are working thee too hard at the mines, I am sure. I am glad you could come home in the day to rest, since it seems you had to work in the night. Juan, let us pray for something better. This hard labor is wearing out my boy's life."

She little knew, as she spoke, how the "hard labor," as she termed it, was at an end, and that the need had come, not only to pray for "something better," but for anything that could yield them a support.

Juan realized it, and his eyes were very sad as he looked upon his mother. But he could not tell her yet. How could he ever repeat that dreadful accusation?

Juan's absence during the night had caused no uneasiness to his mother. Had Mr. Caldwell gone on he would not have found the sorely distressed household he anticipated. Juan was in the habit of staying out at night. He was in every sense a mountaineer. He loved the free and easy life. He had learned to sleep in all sorts of places while tending his goats and burros. It saved him many a weary tramp homeward. His mother knew he had a place in the mountains where he slept and sometimes took his meals; she had provided him with food now and then, though she did not exactly know about the cave. Juan and Paulina kept that to themselves. Save for Mr. Morris, they had never told anyone. Juan had

slept in the cave several nights since he had been working in the mines, especially since he had lost Chonita. It was nearer and saved him some walking.

"Mother," said Juan, "I will go and try to sleep now. I am very tired."

"But wilt thou not have something to eat first?" she asked solicitously.

"No, I could not eat," he returned quickly, impetuously; "the food would choke me!"

His mother looked at him suddenly and with searching eyes. "Juan," she said reproachfully, "is there more than you have told me?"

Juan's eyes dropped. He realized his mistake. "Yes, there is more," he confessed candidly. "But do not be alarmed. I will tell thee when I have slept and rested."

But he could not sleep. Hour after hour passed, yet he lay awake, tossing feverishly from side to side.

"Juan," said a voice, as some one approached him and sat on the mat beside him, "I knew you were not asleep, for I heard you moving about. What is the matter with you? Can you not tell Paulina?"

"Yes, Paulina. I can and I will, but not now — no, not now," he added positively. "Trust me. You will, I know. You are a good sister. I love you. When it is best I will tell."

Paulina seemed satisfied, and turned to the little book she had brought with her.

"Juanito, here is such a beautiful thing in the book the missionary gave me. It is something Jesus said to the people when he spoke to them on the mountain. You love the mountains, Juan, and I know you will be pleased to hear that Jesus loved them too."

Happy Paulina had found the truth. Jesus was her Jesus now. And how she longed for Juan to find him, too!

Juan turned over to look at her more closely. His eyes were filled with interest.

"What was it he said, Paulina, to the people on the mountain, that was so beautiful?"

"It was this, Juan. He said, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.'"

Paulina said this slowly and impressively. Was not Juan mourning now? If she could only comfort him! But no one could do that like Jesus. How she longed to talk to Juan about the trouble, and beg him to let Jesus comfort him! But Juan had said he could not mention it now. She must wait.

"There was something else," continued Paulina, "something else that a good man wrote, a missionary like Mr. Morris. It, too, is in this book, God's Book. The man's name was Paul. Oh, I am so glad it is a part of my name!" and Paulina's eyes were misty with earnestness. "The other beautiful thing, the thing that Paul wrote, was this: 'All things work to-

gether for good to them that love God.'"

A ray shot into Juan's eyes. He raised himself upon his elbow.

"I like that best of all," he declared. "Say it again, Paulina."

She repeated it.

"But I do not love God," he said slowly, and with a face that showed his shame; "or at least not as I ought."

"Oh, Juan!" said Paulina reproachfully. "Yes, you do; I am sure you do. Not love God? — the dear God who made us, who gives us all?"

"Yes, Paulina, I love him. I could not be so wicked as to say I do not. But I do not love him as I ought."

"But you will, Juan; I know you will. Only think of how good and kind he is, and it will be so easy."

Juan thought of these words all the way over the mountain, for he had made up his mind in the afternoon to go to the cave. He was troubled, restless. If only he could see the missionary! Perhaps he might be at the cave. But this would doubtless be too good to be true.

"All things work together for good to them that love God." How sweet, how comforting the words! It was not hard to love God. How could it be?

Juan found the cave gloomy, deserted. He could have cried, sturdy boy that he was. It was such a disappointment.

He sank upon the mat, and buried his face in his hands. How long he sat

there, he did not know. He took no note of time.

Suddenly a cheery voice startled him. It said: "Well, I see you are here before me! All the same, my boy, I'm glad, sincerely glad to see you."

Juan sprang up. It was the missionary. He could have thrown himself upon his neck, he was so glad to see him.

Mr. Morris appeared not to have noticed that Juan had been sitting with so dejected an air, his face buried in his hands. But doubtless he thought it wiser not to allude to it just then.

They sat and talked for a long while. Juan had brought fresh tortillas and some goat's meat. The missionary, too, had a lunch in his traveling bags.

"And now, Juan," said the missionary, as he put his arm about the boy, "we have talked of many things, but not of the one which is troubling you, I know. What is it, my boy? Tell me all."

It was so easy to tell him all after those words, the affectionate clasp about his shoulders, the warm pressure of the hand! He would understand, he would sympathize, above all he would believe. How Juan's heart swelled at the thought!

Mr. Morris listened closely, earnestly, to every word of the story. At its conclusion, he said:

"Poor boy! you have indeed had a hard time of it! I am surprised at Caldwell!" he continued energetically. "I gave him credit for more penetration than that."

He then asked Juan several questions, particularly about the thieves, and their manner of proceeding, where the secret entrance to the mine was, the time of the morning the robbers came out, and other inquiries of like import. After a pause, he said:

"Juan, I am going to take this matter in hand. I am going to see that the truth is known, that justice is done. You must let me manage it after a plan of my own, but one which as yet, for a certain reason, I can not make known to you. But you will understand it in good time. You must trust me, my boy—that is all."

"I will do that, Señor, with all my heart," said Juan earnestly.

"And cheer up, Juan," continued the missionary. "Look on the bright side. 'All things work together for good to them that love God.'"

Here were the words again. How it thrilled Juan's heart to hear them once more! Surely, they must have a meaning for him, since twice the message had been given. They did, they should, have a meaning! He would delay no longer. He would love God with all his heart, and he would trust that the sweet promise would be fulfilled.

"Juan," said Mr. Morris after they had sat some moments in silence, "I have these instructions for you: To-morrow morning at least an hour before the robbers will come from the cave — from what you have told me I believe this will be

about sunrise — I want you to be at the entrance to the cañon, and there meet Mr. Caldwell, one or two others, and myself."

"Yes, sir," replied Juan, but his heart sank. Was he to meet Mr. Caldwell again and hear some more of his cruel words? How could Mr. Morris be so unkind!

The missionary seemed to divine a part of the boy's thoughts, for he said quickly:

"Juan, Mr. Caldwell will not treat you as he did this morning. You may rest assured of that."

"I could not bear it if he did," said Juan. At the words his lips trembled and his eyes filled with tears.

"My poor lad," said the missionary, placing his arms affectionately about the boy's shoulders, "you have indeed been sorely tried. But trust the Father, Juan, the dear, loving, pitying Father without whose knowledge not even a sparrow falls to the ground. He knows, and he will make all things right. Do you love him well enough, my boy, to feel that he will let all things work together for your good because you so love him?"

"Oh, yes, my father, I do; at last I can say I do!" declared Juan, a happy light in his eyes.

It was the first time Juan had ever thus called Mr. Morris, had ever addressed him as his spiritual father, and it made the missionary's heart glow; but more than all it thrilled him to know that out of the

shadows into the sweet clear light — the light of truth — the boy had come at last.

CHAPTER VIII.

GOOD COMES.



THE night was well advanced before Juan came in sight of his home. A light was burning, and, as he neared the door, he could hear the sound of voices. At first he thought perhaps his mother and sisters had grown uneasy and had sat up for him, but, on second thought, he knew it was not likely, as they had become used to his absences at night.

Paulina was the first to hear his step. She almost rushed into his arms as he stood in the door.

"O Juan," she cried joyously, "such a sweet, beautiful thing has happened! It is about mother and Juanilita. I grew brave, Juan, and I read them more from the dear Book than I thought I could. At first they were angry with me, and they would not listen. But after a while, they could not help it. Soon I did not have to offer to read, for they would ask me. And now, O Juan, this very night they have told me that they believe what the Book says."

She could hardly finish the words, she was so overcome by her happy tears.

Juan leaned down and kissed her. "This is indeed joyous news, Paulina," he said; "and there is one more," he continued softly, "that you may add to those who are to be on Jesus' side."

She started, while a quick little exclamation escaped her. Then, as she pressed nearer to him and looked up into his face, she cried, "O Juanito, can it be it is thyself?"

"Yes, it is myself. Only this day I have said to the missionary that I will give my love to the dear Father of whom he and you have told me, the Father who will bring all things about for good to those who love him. There has been trouble, Paulina, such trouble as almost broke my heart, but now there is the sweet hope that if I trust in the Father and ask him for Jesus' sake, all will be made right."

They went into the house, Paulina clinging to Juan and too happy to speak.

The joyous news with which Paulina had met Juan at the door was soon confirmed, and until almost daylight the little family sat and talked of its new-found joy.

"Oh, it seems too good to be true," said the old mother, "that there is One who can hear and answer prayer, One who is ever with us, as the Book says. But best of all," she concluded, her eyes glowing, "it is that we may come 'without money

and without price!' Every one, no matter how poor or how wicked, may come to him and he will make them happy, and do what is best for each one."

"Yes," said Juanita, "that part of it is so plain and simple. So beautiful, too! How could we ever have believed the other way!"

At daylight the next morning Juan stood at the entrance to the cañon awaiting Mr. Caldwell, the missionary, and the others. They soon came. Juan dared not look at Mr. Caldwell for some time, though he had passed him a kind good-morning.

"Good-day, sir," returned Juan, but he did not raise his eyes. He could not then.

When Juan did take a look at Mr. Caldwell's face, it was not as reassuring as the missionary's words had led him to believe it would be. Mr. Caldwell treated him kindly — there was no ground on which to complain of him in this respect — but on the superintendent's face was a look which plainly indicated that as yet all was not clear to him. There was not only visible doubt and perplexity, but embarrassment. It was doubtless that he had received the story brought by the missionary with a certain degree of incredulity, though he knew Mr. Morris well enough to be assured that he would not have made such statements had he not himself believed them fully. The missionary had been deceived — yes, that was it. But developments would show, and Mr. Cald-

well had been willing to come and put the truth of the story to the test.

There were three men besides Mr. Caldwell and the missionary. Mr. Caldwell and two of the men had pistols; the other two had guns. How fervently Juan prayed that no hurt would be done, no blood shed! It would be so dreadful.

Mr. Morris noticed the start he gave as he caught sight of the weapons, and he said reassuringly:

“That is only to frighten them, Juan, my boy; do not be alarmed. The thieves are cowards, I am sure, and will not fight.”

The sun was just rising as they reached a certain point in the cañon and concealed themselves behind the rocks.

As yet Mr. Caldwell knew very little of the real story. He did not even know of the secret entrance to the cave. The missionary, after seeing him and telling him of Juan's innocence, and that proofs were at hand, had concluded:

“Now, Caldwell, I want you to do as I entreat. I am going to stay with you tonight. In the morning, at daybreak, I want you to be with me at the mouth of the cañon that lies to the right of the base of the Sierra Colonial. Furthermore, I want you to go armed and to take three trusty men with you also armed. Shortly after we arrive there, if I mistake not, evidence will be given you of the innocence of that boy, Juan Hernandez. Trust me without my telling you more at

present. I want to manage it my own way. Let me do so, will you not? Only, one word of caution. The boy will be there. When you meet him, treat him as kindly as you can. It means much, believe me.”

After considerable discussion and many more entreaties on the missionary's part, Mr. Caldwell finally agreed to the plan.

As the point of cover was reached, behind the rocks near the entrance of the cave, the missionary said to Mr. Caldwell: “Fix your eyes upon that jutting ledge yonder, and wait patiently.”

A half hour or so passed. Mr. Caldwell was evidently growing impatient. He moved about restlessly, and several times complained of the cramped position. Just as Mr. Morris was coming to the conclusion that he could keep him there no longer, and that he should have to tell him all, there was a sudden, sharp whisper from Juan.

“Look!” he said. “They are coming!”

There was a moving object near the angle of the ledge, an object vivid in coloring—a man's head, bound turban-fashion in a handkerchief of bright colors. He had removed his hat, and was holding it in his hands.

Behind this man came four donkeys, then two other men. The donkeys carried baskets, and each seemed to be heavily laden. But before the donkeys had come in sight, the first man had ap-

peared at the opening, looking cautiously about. They were evidently more on the alert than they had been the morning before.

Apparently satisfied, he had motioned to the others, then by degrees the procession appeared in sight, moving around the ledge.

Mr. Caldwell understood it all now. His eyes were blazing, his lips firmly set. These men had been stealing the ore, and it was for their capture he had come.

Before taking his place by Mr. Caldwell, Mr. Morris had arranged the men, and at the last moment had whispered to them what was to be done. Before they could realize even a portion of what awaited them, the robbers were surrounded and caught. They had no time for resistance, even if they had wanted to offer it, for no sooner were they surprised than each was grasped and his arms firmly pinioned.

As Mr. Caldwell stood at the secret entrance and heard the full account of Juan's brave exploit, his chest heaved and his eyes were full of tears.

"How I have wronged you, my boy!" he said, clasping Juan's hands. "Forgive me; it seemed so clear against you."

He stepped away a minute or so to talk to the missionary. When he returned, there was a smile on his lips and a light in his eyes that had almost quenched the tears.

"Juan," he said, "come to the mines in three days from now."

Juan's heart gave a jump. So he was to be taken back in his old place again! Then, despite him, there came a thrill of pain. The superintendent had said "in three days." Why had he not said "at once"? Could it be that he was not even now satisfied, and wanted to make further investigation? It took much of the joy out of Juan's heart to think it.

At the end of three days, Juan stood in the superintendent's office at the mines. But his face was not so bright as Mr. Caldwell would have liked to see it. There was still that cloud on it. But the superintendent chuckled to himself as he thought how quickly that cloud was going to be swept away by what was in store—a something of which Juan had not the remotest hint.

"Juan," said Mr. Caldwell, "your old place is open to you, and remember you will be promoted as fast as you deserve it. Now, go through the office into the little yard at the rear. Mr. Morris is there and wants to speak to you."

Juan obeyed, but he wondered why Mr. Caldwell should smile at him in that way. He did not see anything amusing, and the superintendent was generally so dignified.

Yes, Mr. Morris was there—but what else was it Juan saw? Could he believe his eyes? Mr. Morris stood near the center of the yard, and about him in a little cluster were Guavo! Elnona! Wachita! Pompono! and—yes, and Chonita! the dear, sweet Chonita!—Chonita standing



Chonita standing at the head.—See page 48.

at their head and blinking her eyes at Juan in a most knowing way.

"Mr. Caldwell's compliments to the brave burro boy of Santa Eulalia," said the missionary, advancing.

Juan waited to hear no more. He rushed to Guavo, to Elnona, to Wachita, to Pompono, and imprinted a kiss upon the scrubby forehead of each, right between the knowing eyes. He would have gathered them all up, if such a thing had been possible, and have hugged them till even their stout little ribs showed signs of giving way. Then he sprang towards Chonita, and flinging his arms around her neck, and drawing her face down to his, burst into a passion of tears — happy, grateful, blessed tears. And if you could have seen him, you would never have once said it was because he had a girl's heart.

That evening, Chonita went down the mountain, stepping proudly at the head

of the burros. I dare say if you had questioned her, she would have said at once that she had brought it all about, for if she had not obeyed so promptly the call of her young master on that critical night, if she had, in short, bungled matters as an ordinary donkey would assuredly have done, what might not have happened? For, after all, Chonita was the heroine of my story, while Juan — well, Juan was only the hero.

On the edge of the plains near the foot of the mountains, and almost in sight of the cross on the spire of the church at Santa Eulalia, is a little mission chapel. Twice each month there are services held. In the small procession of worshipers filing down the mountains to attend them you will never fail to find the Widow Hernandez and her family. It is quite needless for me to tell you that Juan leads the procession and that he rides — Chonita!



PSAIT-COP-TA'S MOCCASINS.

BY ANNIE MARIA BARNES.

A STORY OF SACRIFICE.



MONG all the Indians among the Indians of the Reservation who had joined the little missionary church at the Agency, none were more truly in earnest than Psait-cop-ta. Now, since perhaps you do not know it, I must tell you that it takes a great deal of bravery for an Indian to cut himself loose from the old ways and practices of his people and to come out boldly on the side of the white man's religion. He has to be wholly in earnest if he can do that, for his people not only ridicule him, and call him a "squaw man"—an epithet that no high-spirited Indian can endure—but they also persecute him. Many incidents of martyrdom from this cause, as genuine as any ever recorded, have come to the notice of our missionaries in the Indian Territory.

Psait-cop-ta was a full-blooded Kiowa Indian. In his young days he had been quite a warrior, and many were the scars he still carried on his body. He was proud of the achievements of his people and of the prominent place they still held

He loved his family, too, especially his old father, who was now past seventy years of age. Sad to say, it was from him that Psait-cop-ta received the greatest amount of persecution.

Ton-ke-ah-bau—which means "Coming up out of the Water,"—was a sub-chief of the Kiowas and a man of influence. He almost adored the Indian race. He thought them the greatest people in the world, the white people not excepted, for had they not been in this country and had it not been all their own hundreds of years before the white people were heard of? He treasured, too, the wrongs of his people, and his heart was filled with no kind feeling toward the whites.

The coming of the missionary was therefore regarded by Ton-ke-ah-bau with distrust. It could bring no good, he declared. There was something else underneath all this outward profession of interest in the Indian's soul, and of desire to teach him of the one true God. So he held aloof from the missionary, and regarded every action with suspicion. He never went to the little mission church.

No inducement could get him there. It was, therefore, with great rage that he learned that Psait-cop-ta had joined the white man's church and was there every Sunday. He was no longer a son of his, he declared, and drove him from his tepee.

Now Psait-cop-ta had no wife or child of his own, though he was nearly thirty-five years of age. The most of the Indians had many wives. Psait-cop-ta had never had but the one. She was dead now, and so were his two little ones. So he had only his father and mother and some brothers and sisters. Thus, when he was driven from his father's tepee, he was all alone in the world. The Agent, with whom he was a favorite, let him live in a little shed back of the government sawmill, and gave him odd jobs to do around the Supply House.

Now Psait-cop-ta had one thing that was always the source of the greatest delight to him. This was the handsomest pair of moccasins on the whole Reservation. They had been made for him by his youngest sister, who was now at school in Carlisle, Pa. There was not another woman anywhere, old or young, who could make such splendid moccasins as Ten-e-do-ah, and now that she was gone Psait-cop-ta's were regarded with the greatest admiration and envy. Several had attempted to buy them from him, but to all he declared that they were not for sale. Unlike most Indian moccasins, they had

thick, durable soles, and would last a long time.

There was one who specially coveted Psait-cop-ta's moccasins. This was Joe Bowmar. Joe was known as a squatter—that is, he had staked a claim about four miles from the Agency, and was now living on it. He had a rough dwelling of boards, part cabin, part dugout, with little furniture save a bed of coyote skins, a rough stool, a tin cup and plate, a water bucket, and a frying-pan for cooking his meals.

The Rev. John Melville, the missionary at the Agency, was a man who went heart and soul into the missionary work. He believed in working up the missionary spirit, even in a mission church. "Why, that ought to be the place of all places for it to have birth!" he declared. So, when there came a call for help to aid a church that was just beginning to struggle along further out on the Reservation, he, without hesitation, put its claim before his people. He told them how pitifully their brethren were begging for the precious bread of life—nay, they were starving, dying for it. The preacher had gone to his work without any special provision for his salary, and now unless he had help, and speedily, he must abandon his post and leave all these souls in ignorance.

The plea made a deep impression upon most of his members. Many responded as liberally as they could. Others prom-

ised to do all in their power by next Sunday. Upon none did the pitiful appeal make a deeper impression than upon

in his pocket, all he had in the world, and went away thinking and planning as to how he could raise more. All at once



"I will give you the moccasins for five dollars," said Psait-cop-ta.—See page 54.

Psait-cop-ta. It pierced his heart as nothing had done before.

He knew what it was to be without the blessings of the gospel, and the thought of all these people — his people — perishing without the light almost broke his heart. He gave the one little silver coin

he thought of his moccasins! Again and again had Joe Bowmar offered three, four, then finally five dollars for them. He wanted them for a Museum Association in the States, the Secretary of which had sent him five dollars to buy just such a pair of moccasins.

But every time the thought of selling the moccasins came to Psait-cop-ta it brought a pang with it. How could he do it? What would his family say? Would it not make the breach between them wider than ever? Besides, he had no other moccasins and no one to make him any, not even a piece of buckskin wherewith to fashion a pair himself, and buckskin sold high. Oh, what a tumult there was in Psait-cop-ta's heart! But it was not the thought of going without the moccasins that troubled him. That was the smallest part, for with that thought always came the remembrance of some words the missionary had spoken of "One"—the One Psait-cop-ta was trying so earnestly to follow—who "for our sakes became poor." And again, "The Son of man had not where to lay his head." How small would be the sacrifice, after all, when compared with what Jesus had suffered that he might help people to live better lives!

Psait-cop-ta had an engagement with Joe that very next morning. He had promised to cut out a pair of leggings for him, and to show him how to make the fringe to adorn them.

"That's capital, Psait-cop-ta!" Joe said admiringly, as the first one was finished and fitted on. "Now, if I only had your moccasins, I'd be as dashing an Indian as any among you!"

This he said a little carelessly, for he had no idea Psait-cop-ta would sell the

moccasins. He had tried him so many times! Besides, Joe didn't really want them himself, but for his friend.

A thrill ran along Psait-cop-ta's veins. There was silence for a moment. Then, as he brought the knife straight down through the strip of buckskin, he said decisively, "If you will give me the five dollars now, you may have the moccasins."

"What!" cried Joe, for he thought he had surely misunderstood him.

"I will give you the moccasins now if you will give me the five dollars," repeated Psait-cop-ta.

"Done! That's a bargain, old fellow!"

And with these words Joe hastened into his little cabin to get the money, for he feared Psait-cop-ta might change his mind ere the bargain was closed.

Psait-cop-ta evidently had no such intention, for when Joe came out again he was standing there with the moccasins in his hand.

When Psait-cop-ta some hours later handed the missionary five dollars and told him for what it was, the missionary was astonished, though he was mindful enough to shower upon the generous fellow all the commendation he deserved. He wondered where he obtained it, for he well knew his condition. If only it had not been night, and Psait-cop-ta had come within the door! Then the missionary could readily have seen just what giving up the moccasins meant to the Indian.

Psait-cop-ta went barefoot all that week. No sacrifice could have been greater for him, for the weather was bitterly cold, and in all his life before he had never known what it was to have no covering between his feet and the ground.

Then the missionary heard the story, and the Agent, too. Joe Bowmar had told it, for it seems he had questioned Psait-cop-ta so closely that he had finally confided to him why he wanted the five dollars. Sunday morning there was a brand new pair of white man's shoes at Psait-cop-ta's door. He never knew exactly how they came there. But he did not have to wear them long. Some one wrote the story to his sister. In three weeks' time there came a far more beautiful pair

of moccasins than the first. Ten-e-do-ah had herself become a Christian, and knew how to appreciate the heroic deed of her brother.

This was not all. The story of Psait-cop-ta's sacrifice, pictured with all the eloquence the glowing pen of the missionary could give it, found its way back to the States, and aroused more than one cold-hearted person there to the duty of giving. Soon the salary of the minister out among the perishing souls on the Reservation was raised for that year and pledged for another.

And now I have told you this story of Psait-cop-ta and his moccasins that you may be aroused to warmer zeal, to greater sacrifice, in your own missionary giving.

THE LITTLE ALACRAN HUNTERS.

BY ANNIE MARIA BARNES.



HERE are many lives—that is, a bed raised above the floor. Their bed and covering consist of an old mat for the one and a blanket, often in rags, for the other. Various are the ways in which these people make a living. Many burn charcoal and carry it for miles on their heads to the towns, getting only a few centavos (cents) per bushel for it. Others cut and

poor people in Mexico, poorer even than the very poorest people you know here. So poor are they that hundreds, even thousands of them, never slept on a bed in their

cord small bundles of the mesquite wood — a thorn bush resembling the locust — with which nearly all the cooking is done in the cities.

But the very strangest way, to say nothing of the danger, is by alacran hunting. The alacran is a scorpion peculiar to some parts of Mexico, and a very deadly and dangerous one. Especially are they found in abundance in and around Durango. Some say the reason of this is because of the great iron mountain there and the properties of the soil in which they fairly thrive.

So numerous and dangerous have these pests become of late years that the Government has found it necessary to offer a reward for their slaying. Seventy-five centavos (cents) a hundred is the price paid for the dead alacrans.

Though the danger is great — for the bite is known to be deadly, especially to children — yet many boys and men make a regular business of hunting the alacrans. Most of the hunting is done at night, though some of the killing takes place in the daytime, when it is more dangerous, for then the scorpions cannot be blinded. The hunters go with lanterns or other lights with which they lure the alacrans out of their holes in the adobe walls and other places. Then blinding them with the glare, they slay them. But now and then the hunter is not quick enough. The scorpion attaches itself to his hand ere the blow can be struck, and

the poison enters his system, often producing death.

Fernando and Andrez were two friends whose adobe huts on the outskirts of Durango were not far apart; or that is, they had been friends, but of late a misunderstanding had arisen. Hot words had been passed, and each had vowed never to speak to the other again.

Of the two Fernando's heart was the bitterer. That night, ere he took down his lantern to go in search of alacrans, he said to his mother:

“Madre (mother), I am going to quit this alacran hunting if Andrez doesn't stop. I hate him so I can't even bear to see him.”

His mother tried to pacify him and also to reason with him.

“Is it not wrong, the way thou art doing?” she asked. “I know Andrez has been unkind to thee and has said hard things of thee. But didn't my Fernando also say hard things in return?”

“Yes, madre, I did, but I could not help it. He provoked me to it. He is mean and I hate him; yes, I hate him!”

“But think how long thou hast been friends with him. Why, at one time you could not bear to be away from him, no, not for a day.”

“But we have quarreled, madre. We have said hot words, and now all is over!”

“Ah, yes, hot words! What will they not do? Hasty tempers! They will part the best of friends. Thou art angry now,

my Fernando. The temper blinds thine eyes. When thou art cooler, then thou wilt think differently, yea, and speak differently, too. Thou wilt even be sorry for the harsh words thou hast spoken."

"Never!" declared Fernando vigorously. "I get angrier and angrier every time I think of what he said to me; and I declare to thee, madre," passionately, "that if he were dying I would not stretch out my hand to help him!"

"Oh, Fernando! Fernando!" and the mother laid her hand upon the shoulder of her impetuous boy. "Take care, my lad, that thou dost not repent, yea in heart's bitterness, those terrible words."

Fernando seized his lamp and rushed away. His mother's words had disturbed him more than he cared to let her see.

There were not many alacran hunters out that night. Several who would have been there had gone to help the ranchmen herd cattle preparatory to driving them down for market.

As Fernando was about to pass to the other side of an adobe wall, he came suddenly face to face with Andrez. He scowled and passed on, Andrez, I am sorry to say, returning the scowl.

Beyond the wall there was an open space. It had once been a garden, and at the upper end the old house was still standing. The garden was overgrown with weeds, and there were piles of stone scattered about. This was known to be a favorite resort of the alacrans.

"If he is coming to the old garden to hunt alacrans," said Fernando, biting his lip, "then I must go to another place. For I can't bear even to look at him."

He stopped suddenly, and turned his head, for at that moment a sharp cry reached him.

The moonlight was partly clear in that open spot, and by it he saw Andrez standing beside one of the small rock piles, his lantern fallen at his feet, his hands working convulsively up and down as though in pain or terror.

In a moment Fernando knew what had happened. Andrez had been careless. An alacran had stung him. Fernando tried to tell himself that he was glad. He even endeavored to get up a little cry of exultation. It fastened itself in his throat and would not come. Why couldn't he show his joy, as he had declared he would if evil overtook Andrez? He tried to walk quickly away. That, too, was a failure. His feet would not carry him.

The pain was now more than Andrez could bear. He was not only swinging his hands convulsively, one grasping the other, but he was also moaning out with the torture.

"I must go," said Fernando, and again he tried to move. "I must go, and let him suffer all he can. He deserves it."

"What?" said a voice. "Go and leave him to die!"

Now Fernando found that he could move. He wheeled quickly, as though the sharp point of a rapier had pricked him.

"Leave him to die!" repeated the voice. "Leave Andrez to die! Your own Andrez of whom you were once so fond?"

"No," answered Fernando, "No," and now there was a sob in his voice, "I can't do that!"

Where was all his passion, his blind hate, now?

"Andrez! Andrez!" he cried sharply, but oh, so pityingly, as he sprang towards the suffering boy. "What is the matter with thee? What has hurt thee? The alacran? Oh, I thought so. Give me the hand, Andrez, give me quickly, and show me the spot where the sting went."

He caught up the wounded hand. He faltered out tender, hysterical words over it as a mother in her grief might have done.

Amazed, Andrez gazed at him, the pain, the terror for the moment forgotten in this strange thing that had come to him. Could this be Fernando — Fernando who only yesterday had declared he hated him so? Fernando, who had said he would gladly see him die?

"The alacran!" cried Fernando again. "It has bitten thee, but it shall not kill thee! I will draw the poison out with my lips, the lips that have said such evil things of thee, Andrez. But oh, forgive

me! I did not know then how one could feel when death came."

At last Andrez comprehended. He looked at him with eyes that held the mist of joy as well as of pain.

"Oh, I am so glad!" he cried, "Fernando, querido mio (my dear one)!" then fell over against Fernando's shoulder, weak and faint.

Fernando put his lips to the wound and strove bravely to extract the poison, but did not know if he had done so. Seeing Andrez still sick and faint, and thinking he must surely be going to die, the alarmed Fernando grasped him firmly in his arms and half carried, half dragged him to the shop of an old boticario (apothecary) he knew was near.

"He will live," declared the boticario promptly. "Much of the poison is already out. I will give him something to finish the work. But, my brave boy, let me first spray your mouth."

"Oh, mother," said Fernando, when telling her about it that very night, "how quickly one's thoughts and feelings can change when death is really near!"

"Yes, my Fernando, and happy is it for one when such can be the case. Some are so hardened, so unforgiving, even the presence of death cannot soften them."

"Oh, mother," replied Fernando with a shudder, "I do not see how a heart could be so hard."

"Thank God that of my dear boy could not be!" And a kiss fell on his face.

“SO LONG TO WAIT.”

BY ANNIE MARIA BARNES.



UST as soon as the girls in our mission schools in Mexico and Brazil have learned the precious truths of the gospel, and feel the sweet influences of them in their

hearts, our missionaries take them as companions and helpers when they go on their rounds of visiting among the poor and sorrowing.

It was a sad scene that one of our missionaries and two of her girls witnessed not long ago in Brazil. I tell it to you because I know it will touch your hearts. Perhaps, too, it will fill them with more love and pity toward these perishing souls. It was in Piracicaba, Brazil, that this incident happened.

When the missionary and the two girls reached the outskirts of the city, they turned into a grassy lane, and went for some distance until they came to a wretched looking hut that stood quite alone. It was built of bamboo poles, with mud daubed in between. There

were great holes in the sides, and the roof was in such a condition that it hardly seemed possible that anyone could live there. But someone did, and a very miserable someone, as you will soon see.

“Oh, Miss Mary!” cried one of the girls, Janita, “do not go in there, please do not! That is where old Castilia Sutro lives. She is nearly a hundred years old. She is a witch, so people say, and has an awful tongue. She will be sure to say something dreadful.”

“Why, my cowardly Janita!” exclaimed Miss Mary. “This poor creature is old and sick and needs us. We must go in spite of everything.”

Izilda also hung back.

“Janita is not the only one who is afraid,” she said. “There is not a girl in all the city who would come here alone.”

“What! Does my Izilda believe in witchcraft, too?” returned Miss Mary, with a smile. “Come, my dears, what nonsense! We must not hesitate. Think of the good we may be able to do to this poor lonely soul. If Jesus were here, would he keep away, think you?”

The girls said no more, but, rather fearfully, followed her into the poor hovel.

As miserable as was the hut on the outside, it was even more wretched within. The walls were of mud and the floor of dirt. There was little furniture, only a table, a bench, and a narrow bed in one corner of the room. On this lay a frail, shriveled creature. Indeed, she was so wasted she seemed only skin and bones. But her eyes were bright, and these she now turned upon them aglow with either excitement or anger. They could not tell which at first.

"Who are you and what do you want?" she cried shrilly.

"Friends," answered Miss Mary in a quiet voice as she approached the bed. "We have come to see if we cannot help you."

"What do you care?" she asked suddenly, even fiercely.

"We care a great deal," returned Miss Mary. "Are you in pain?"

"Yes; I am in pain."

"Where?" was the gentle question.

She placed her claw-like hands upon her head.

Miss Mary approached, and, opening the little medicine case she carried, made a soothing application. It seemed to relieve the suffering creature.

"Would you like to have us sing?" asked Miss Mary.

She gave her consent, though they could see it was with a feeling of doubt.

Miss Mary made a movement, and the two girls began to sing, "I am so glad that Jesus loves me."

The old woman raised herself to a sitting posture, her eyes glowing, her lips trembling.

"I have not heard of anything like that before!" she cried, "never! never! Jesus doesn't care anything about a poor old woman like me!"

"Have you ever had a child?" asked Mary abruptly.

The woman covered her face with her bony hands for a moment. When she removed them there was one bright drop trickling slowly down her cheek.

"My one — my little one!" she murmured. "My baby girl! But she was cruel to her poor old mother. Ah, she has gone far, far! She will come to her mother no more!"

"Then you do not love her still?"

"Love her!"

The woman almost sprang to her feet in indignation, and her searching eyes blazed into Mary's face.

"I asked if you love her still," said Mary, gently. "If she were to come back and tell you she is sorry, would you let her in?"

Castilia sank back on the pillow.

"Yes," she said, with a great tenderness. "Were it to rack my last breath from me, I would fold her to my bosom."

"Then," said Mary, "you know how Jesus feels."

"What!"

"Jesus loves you, just as you love your daughter, only far, far more. He is just as anxious to take you and fold you in his bosom."

"But Jesus is away up in heaven."

"Jesus is here. When people die they will only know him better, and see more clearly how much he loves them and how tenderly he cares for them."

"All this is very strange. I never heard anything like it before. Is it really true? Will he hear me — a poor creature like me?" The abject humility was pathetic to see.

"Yes, mother, he will; Jesus will hear all who pray to him earnestly.

"How can I believe it? It is too good to be true."

"Only trust him. Love him a little as your daughter would love you if she came home sorry, and found how much you love her. Put your hand in his and let him keep you in life and in death."

Other sweet and precious things were said. The old creature listened eagerly, hungrily. Then the little Testament was read, another hymn sung, and a fervent prayer made that went upward to the very throne of grace.

"Now I must go," Miss Mary said as she arose from her knees.

"Nay, do not go!" entreated old Castilia. "Tell me more — more!"

"But I cannot now," returned Miss Mary, deeply touched. "It is late; we

must go. But, mother, I will come again; I will come again to tell you of these things."

"When? When will you come?" her eyes almost burning through Miss Mary. Oh, what fire they had!

The missionary hesitated. Her heart prompted her to say "to-morrow," but she knew she could not. Her life was such a busy, crowded one. With all that she had before her, she knew it would be a week at least ere she could return to Castilia.

The old woman moaned piteously when she heard it.

"A week! A week!" she cried. "Oh, that is so long to wait! — so long to wait!"

"Well, then," said Miss Mary, her heart touched to the core by the old creature's distress, "I will try to come in three days."

"But even three days are long! Oh, so long, so long!"

Alas, they were to be long, long indeed, for when Miss Mary went again, true to her promise, she found the hut entirely deserted. There was not a trace of Castilia, not even the bed with its miserable clothing. Some one had taken her away. Miss Mary could find no one who seemed to know a thing about where they had carried her. She was perhaps removed in the night.

It was now too late! Oh, the bitterness of the words, "too late"! "So long

had she waited," a hundred years or thousands of them are waiting still, more, in darkness, in superstition and groping blindly, piteously, amid the despair, waited for the light that came shadows, waiting so long! so long! because, careless, unheeding, we keep back too late! "So long to wait! so long to wait!" she had cried from the depths of from them the wondrous, beautiful story her despairing heart. And hundreds, of Jesus the Light of the world.

FEAST OF ST. JOHN IN BRAZIL.

BY ANNIE MARIA BARNES.



THE feast of St. John, dreds of dollars for these things, so as to which occurs on the 24th of June, is a great festival in Brazil; indeed, the greatest of all the year.

It is regarded somewhat as Christmas is in our own country, though of course it cannot have for these people the sweet and tender significance that Christmas has for us.

The Feast is observed everywhere throughout Brazil, in the cities, the towns, and in the country. Especially is it observed by the children and laborers on the "fazendas" (farms). Here it occurs at night principally, and great illumination is made. Sometimes two or three days are spent hauling up the wood for the bonfires, and subscriptions to raise money for fireworks are sent all about. The wealthy coffee-planters spend hun-

At dark the bonfires were kindled. As soon as they were in a blaze, the procession formed. It was made up principally of the laborers on the place—men, women, and even children. There was a band, but such music as it made! At the head of the procession walked two men who carried a long, stout pole. Near the center of the bonfires a hole had been dug in the ground. The procession marched twice around the bonfires, and then entered the space between, forming a circle about the opening. As they stopped, the two men who carried the pole walked forward and placed the end of it into the hole in the ground. At the top of the

pole there was a banner, and on the banner a figure of St. John.

While the men were placing the staff in the opening, those in the circle advanced and threw into it handfuls of coffee-grains, beans and rice. Even an egg or two was placed carefully in, so as to bring good luck to the hens. Finally, the pole was securely planted. Then a loud burst of gay "vivas" (hurrahs) broke from the crowd. Following the "vivas" came a volley of rockets. The children shouted and clapped their hands. This was the best part for them, except the feast, and even the feast was not quite so grand. These sounds of approval had barely died away in their throats when there was a great, beautiful burst of Roman candles. It looked as though the whole sky was on fire. The Roman candles were followed by sky-rockets again, then by other Roman candles, and finally by blazing wheels, that, fastened to poles, fairly spun around, casting showers of glowing sparks.

The last volley of the fireworks consisted of pieces that exploded after they had reached some distance in midair, looking, as they did so, like blazing bouquets of flowers. The children fairly screamed with delight. To them it seemed very grand.

Soon the crowd began to march around the pole that had the figure of St. John on the banner, in a very sedate and slow manner. I suppose this was due in part

to the dismal music, which was made principally on an instrument called a "tambour." This consisted of a piece of skin stretched over a barrel head, and beaten with sticks, like a drum. If it had not been for one or two stringed instruments that accompanied it and partly drowned the horrid noise, it would have been well-nigh unbearable. A man was beating it, and with all his might. He was a large man, and his face was dripping with perspiration, but still he kept on. He knew well that he had the post of envy at the feast, and seemed determined to do full credit to it. Every one wanted to beat the drum, for the louder and the longer he could beat it, thus doing honor to the Saint, just in like proportion it was thought would blessings be showered upon him during the year.

There were many women in the crowd. Some of them had babies in their arms, and there were even small children clinging to their skirts. It did look as though these tiny ones ought to have been in bed. But what child is there in Brazil who can sleep on St. John's Eve, the most delightful time to them of all the year? Most of the women and children had little crucifixes of wood or stone. These they kissed every now and then, and with them saluted the picture of the Saint on the banner. They were thus beseeching him to bring them all the good luck he could for the balance of the year.

After spending two or three hours in

this way, the people sat down to a feast that was prepared for them by the master of the plantation. They kept up the revelry until daylight, and then occurred another ceremony. This consisted in taking the image of St. John from the chapel to the creek for a bath, as the Saint was supposed to look upon this with great favor. But alas! on this morning there happened what these poor creatures considered a dreadful thing. Those who bore the image to the creek let it drop, and it was broken. At once there was a chorus of groans from the men and cries of terror from the women. What was to happen to them now? What were all the ceremonies in honor of the Saint after this dreadful calamity, in which his image had been upset and broken? Surely he would visit his displeasure upon them now.

They spent all that day doing penance, rubbing ashes on their heads and whipping themselves. Some even cut themselves with pieces of the broken image. They hoped in this way to appease the

Saint and to make him grow pleased with them again. Late in the evening the mistress of the plantation sent them word not to distress themselves any more; that she would buy a new image for the chapel, and that they could raise the money to buy some lace for a ruffle for the Saint's gown. After receiving the message, they seemed satisfied, and dispersed to their homes. But it was such a sad St. John's Day for the children—not like St. John's Day at all. They did think it so hard that they had to fast, too, and beat themselves with the switches, when they had had nothing to do with breaking the image of the Saint!

Oh, how miserable and sad and dark is the life of these people! Ought not our hearts to go out to them in tenderness and sympathy and love? Ought not we to do all we can to send them the true, sweet light, the light of the gospel? For to think that in all that great country of Brazil there is only one missionary to every one hundred and thirty-eight thousand souls!



“NUMBER TWENTY-NINE.”

BY R. M. ALDEN.



T was a bad night at Mifflin, like a sensible man, wanted to spend the evening at home, and as the wind blew at a fearful rate and seemed to come from all directions

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rules required him to keep the office open until half-past ten, he found Tom quite a convenience.

at once. The snow had been piled in great rolling banks, among the gullies and crevices of the mountain, and there was no sign of a path anywhere about; even the railroad track, which usually wound so conspicuously along its narrow path, could now scarcely be distinguished from the white all about it. Worst of all, if you started to walk out the wind caught you and tried to carry you crosswise through the snowdrifts, blowing into your eyes so that you could not see, and nipping your nose and ears in the bargain.

It was not strange, then, that no one was out. The only sign of life even at the railroad station was the light in the ticket office, and Tom Barney would soon blow that out and close up for the night. Tom was a boy who lived alone with his mother on the side of the mountain, and who worked at the station when there was anything for him to do. There was surely nothing to do to-night, but the agent, Mr.

“You won’t have anything to do,” he said, as he buttoned his great-coat all the way up to his ears. “Nobody will be on such a horrible night, and there are no more trains until Number 29. I doubt if she gets in on time, the tracks are so blocked. I’ve opened the switch so that she’ll run right through on that; the main track through the gully there is so full of snow I’m afraid she would stick fast. You can shut everything up so as to leave just at half-past ten; and look out you go carefully or you’ll be blown off into the ravine.”

Then he was off into the darkness, and Tom was left sole monarch of the station. Everything would have been very still if it had not been for that howling wind, which swept around the corners of the building and made a fearful humming in the telegraph wires. Inside the lamps flickered sleepily and left most of the room in black shadows. Tom whistled a little, to keep himself cheerful, but the

wind could whistle so much louder that it scarcely paid. He tried to look out of the window, but of course there was nothing to see. At last he fell into a little heap in Mr. Mifflin's arm-chair, and before long was napping.

Lone Mountain was a town of almost no size at all, and would never have been heard of if it had not been just at the point where the long railroad swept around the mountains. Just here a narrow path had been cut for the track, and a sharp curve bent half way round the town, so that the fast passenger trains must receive a signal of safety before they turned suddenly into what Mr. Mifflin had called “the gully.” In the office were a number of levers for this purpose, reaching by unseen wire fingers far up and down the track, and throwing out red and green and white signal-arms by day, and red and green and white lights by night. Just after you passed the bend, where the slope of the mountain gave a little more space for the railroad, was a long switch that lay right above the edge of the ravine, and served as a standing-place for freight and accommodation trains, while the hurrying expresses flew by.

Tom's dreams seemed pleasant for a time, but at length grew more disturbing, so that he moved, bumped his head against a wooden cornice, and then became wide awake. He looked about carefully; nothing had happened since his

doze had begun, except that the steady old clock had been moving on, and had now passed ten. Number 29 was late, then, for certainly she could not have passed the station without waking Tom.

Number 29 was the fast night express from New York, and came through Lone Mountain with a rattle and roar which even this boisterous wind would not be able to drown. Tom looked about to see that all the windows were fastened, and thought how soon he should be inside the snug sitting-room, with mother kissing the cold away from his face. And oh! this was mother's birthday, and he had told her to sit up for him unless he should be kept later than half-past ten. He had some extra wages in his pocket as a present for her, and he was going to make some toast and have her make some coffee, as a sort of celebration “to warm them up” before they should go to bed. No wonder that the clock seemed to travel slowly.

Suddenly Tom thought of something that made him stand still in the middle of the office and think. It was only what Mr. Mifflin had said about sending Number 29 through on the switch on account of the drifts. Had he remembered that the switch had not been connected with the main track at the other end, that afternoon, because the coal train from the mines had been snowed up and had not come through as usual? Of course he had, and had made the connection at the

other end when he had opened the switch for the express at the New York end. Mr. Mifflin never forgot anything; there was the "all right" signal set for Number 29, and there were the train despatches for the day filed together in their usual order. Mr. Mifflin was as regular as the clock itself. And yet—if the switch should have been left unconnected! Tom shuddered as he thought of the great train running on it in the darkness, and then running off into nowhere where the track narrowed along the edge of the ravine! If it were only a pleasant evening, and not mother's birthday, he would take a walk down to the end of the switch, and make sure that everything was all right. But on such a night! It was very foolish in him to bother his head about such matters, anyway; he was not left there to attend to any arrangements of switching, and would not be responsible even if an accident should occur. An accident? It would be a dreadful thing on such a railroad and on such a night.

It was still not half-past ten, and Tom sat down again under the lamp, and wished he had something to think about besides that switch and Number 29. He felt in his pocket for something to look at, and pulled out his Christian Endeavor pledge—

"I promise Him that I will strive to do whatever He would like to have me do."

That was not just what he was after. Tom did not like the look of those words.

It was only two Sundays before that he had joined that Endeavor Society at the chapel in the Glen, and had had a talk with the minister about the pledge. "I



don't know anything in particular that He wants to have me do," Tom had said doubtfully.

"Never mind that," said the minister. "Wait, and you will find plenty. 'Whatever,' you see it says. They will not likely be big things, Tom, nor perhaps very hard

ones, but little every-day matters that it would be easy to leave undone, except that you will hear Him saying, ‘I should

safely home in the little sitting-room with mother? Now she would have gone to bed before he returned.

like to have Tom do this.’ Only be ready, see that you listen for what He says, and your pledge will surely come into use.”

But there, at last, was the light at the end of the switch; and here must be the place where it joined the main track.

Tom pushed away the snow with his feet, and felt of the icy rails. Then he gave a little cry of surprise and dismay. The switch was not open to the main track! The train would go through into the ravine!

Tom almost started now, as he remembered the minister’s words. The storm was roaring louder than ever; could it be that Christ was out in it, saying, “I should like to have Tom be sure about that switch before he goes home to-night”? Or perhaps he might be in the train that was coming on so surely, somewhere along the track, and was sending Tom a message such as the train-depatcher sent to Mr. Mifflin. The instruments on the table clicked a little — were they saying, “I should like to have Tom —”?

What should be done? Tom had not the switch-key; he doubted even whether it was in the station, as Mr. Mifflin usually kept it in his pocket. And there was surely no time to find the agent, for the train was already as late as it ever was, and only a moment before Tom had thought he heard its long whistle borne down the track by the wind. There was only one thing that he could do, and that was to change the “all right” signal and throw out the red light at the New York end of the switch. Back he started toward the station. The wind was now in his face. The snow seemed to tug at his feet and try to pull him down. Would not his Master, whose message he was trying to follow, help him to be in time?

Tom waited no longer. The hands of the clock were at half-past ten. He jumped up, buttoned his coat as tightly as he could, and started out down the switch. Oh, but it was cold! And the snow was fearfully hard to walk in, and his eyes filled with tears from facing the bitter wind, and there were so many slippery places where a fall would mean that mother would wait, and wait, and never meet him coming in at the door! He shut his teeth hard, and tried to pray a little as he stumbled along. The switch had never seemed so long before. And was it all worth while, when he might have been

Hark! That surely was the whistle of Number 29, and it was so near that Tom knew she must be coming down the long grade on the other side of the mountain. One more dash, and he had plunged into the station. Already the engineer would

have seen the "all right" signal on the other side of the curve, and would be making full speed for Lone Mountain. If it should be too late! Tom gave one quick glance at the row of levers that he

and sure enough there was the familiar light saying "All right" in friendly fashion. All ready, then, for the long sweep around Lone Mountain bend! But wait!—suddenly, as though some unseen



The conductor and trainmen were on the ground in a moment.
—See page 70.

had watched so often, but never expected to use; then he seized one and pushed it as far as it would go.

The engineer of Number 29 had come down the long grade, as Tom guessed,

hand had reached up in the darkness ahead, the light swung round out of sight—and a red one shone in its place! Mysterious as this was, there was but one thing for the engineer to do, and the brakes came down with a crash, while the great engine, at first unwilling to pause, had to yield to the tugging at its wheels,

and at last came to a standstill only a few feet back from the spot where Tom had pushed away the snow from the deceitful switch.

It was an unheard-of thing for Number 29 to act in such a fashion at Lone Mountain, and the conductor and trainmen were on the ground in a moment, asking questions of nobody in particular, while Mr. Mifflin came tearing down from his house to the station. Of course Tom—with the snow and ice clinging to him from head to foot, his cap lost somewhere in his wanderings, half-frozen and wholly happy—was the only one who could tell just what had happened. Of course, too, he became the hero of the occasion, and the passengers, when they knew what they had escaped and what Tom had done, were for taking him forcibly with them and making him lose the birthday celebration after all. He scarcely knew what was done, except that he was soon on

his way to the warm sitting-room, bringing in his pocket a much heavier birthday present than his extra wages could have amounted to for many a day.

But Tom's mother's best gift was the talk of her boy's bravery, which was everywhere about, next day, and of course his best reward was her pride over it all.

"How did you ever come to think about the switch, anyway, Tom?" she asked, wiping her eyes at the thought of his struggle with the storm and the snow.

"Oh," said Tom, laughing, "I had a despatch about it, just as Mr. Mifflin does."

And then he told her more seriously about the pledge, and the message that seemed to come through the storm—"I should like to have Tom"—adding, "Suppose I hadn't done what He wanted me to, mother!"

"But you did!" said his mother. "And He knows."



AN EARTHLY IMMORTALITY.

BY MARY A. P. STANSBURY.



E had with us, that hamlet in the heart of the Northwestern pine woods. His report of his work was remarkably encouraging, and, as we walked together after the meeting, I questioned him as to some additional details. At length he said with a peculiar intonation:

“But I could never have done without my colleague.”

“Your colleague? I did not know that you had one.”

“Nor did I — at first. I found it out by degrees, as I went among my people. She is a young girl, they tell me. I, myself, have not seen her — yet.”

Was he willfully mystifying me? Stealing a glance at him, I met his downward smiling eyes.

“Let me tell you about her,” said he.

I reproduce the simple story as nearly as possible in his own words, without the troublesome device of quotation.

I shall not soon forget my first view of

my new home, seen through the grayness of a cloudy, late November afternoon. We had been steaming for hours through a monotonous stretch of forest, varied only by broad belts of blackened timber, marking the path of the fierce fires of the preceding summer, the scattered stations strung like beads upon the endless ribbon of the rail. Slab City, as we approached, seemed not unlike the rest — a small clearing still bristling with stumps, in which rude, mostly unpainted buildings clustered irregularly around a great mill, whose whizzing saws sounded above the pant of the slowing engine. The straggling streets were paved with sawdust, immense piles of finished lumber loomed everywhere like the outworks of a fortification, and the air was full of resinous odors.

A few roughly dressed men and boys elbowed each other upon the platform. As I appeared at the door of the coach, one of them stepped quickly forward.

“You’re the new minister, I reckon?” said he, extending a toil-hardened hand. “My name’s Lecker.”

“Oh, yes!” said I. “I have your letter in my pocket, Mr. Lecker. So it is at your house that I am to live?”

"You're right! Got any traps?"

I turned to claim my modest trunk just set off from the baggage-car.

"Bear a hand there, you, Bill!" said my companion to a big boy in a scarlet woolen blouse. "We'll tote it over."

I followed in the rear of my belongings to the door of one of the plainest houses, where a motherly-looking woman stood in waiting.

"You're welcome, Mr. Howard," said she. "God knows, your like's needed in Slab City."

The living-room which we entered, though scrupulously clean, was furnished only with the barest necessities. Two little girls, perhaps eight and ten years old, stood bashfully behind their mother.

"You, Jinny," said Mrs. Lecker to the elder, "just show Mr. Howard where to find his room. Supper'll be on in five minutes, sir."

The child sprang forward with eager obedience, her face changing and glowing. Her swift feet led the way up the rude stair-case, while I followed slowly with — I shame to confess it — a sudden depression seizing upon me as my mind's eye anticipated the 'comfortless apartment henceforth to be my home.

At a turn of the landing, the child paused, cast a backward glance, and, with a sweep of her small arm not unworthy the dignity of a robed verger, threw the door wide open. If I had suddenly been transported to fairy-land, the surprise

could hardly have been greater. What I saw was a little room looking to the south and east through windows curtained with snowy muslin. Walls and ceiling were hung with paper of a delicate wild-rose pattern; chintz draperies in blending colors adorned the bed and chest of drawers, and a low, broad couch heaped with pillows, filled a shadowy recess. Upon a roomy writing-table stood an exquisite vase filled with autumn leaves, and a set of book-shelves held a few volumes and periodicals. Two or three charcoal sketches were pinned upon the wall, and on a whitewood easel rested a single large photograph — that marvelous vision of consecration and sacrifice — the "Christ or Diana?"

A strange excitement thrilled me like the inspiration of some invisible presence. For a moment I had forgotten my little guide, but, recalling myself with sudden compunction, a glance at her triumphant face assured me that my demeanor had been satisfactory.

"It is a beautiful room!" said I.

"We thought you'd like it, sir," answered the child, all her shyness gone. "It was Miss Mary's room — our teacher's, sir. She knew all about you, and how you was coming, and so, when she was — was going away, she said everything should be left for you, just as she had it. It's the prettiest room in Slab City, sir. There's some — like Mis' Stevens', or Mis' Jake Barnard's — as is fur-

nished richer like, but, laws! I wouldn't set 'em alongside of it. You see, this one's just like Miss Mary!"

A light dawned upon me. "Mary Nevins" had been the name signed to the letters which had led the missionary-board to investigate the needs of Slab City, and to decide, at length, upon establishing a station there.

"And how long has Miss Mary been gone?" I asked.

"Two months, sir." Jinny's voice trembled. "I've took care of the room—she showed me how."

"Can you tell me where she is? I must write to thank her."

Jinny gazed at me aghast.

"What is it, my child?"

"Don't you know, sir? Miss Mary's gone to—God!" The small brown hands went to her face, and she broke into so piteous a sobbing that I was fain to drop into a chair, and, lifting her upon my knee, comfort her as best I might, with tears in my own eyes.

"We've got quite a tol'able Sunday-school a'ready," said my host as we sat at supper. "Miss Mary—Miss Nevins, that is, the day-school teacher we had for a couple o' years—she started it. We've done the best we could to keep it along since we lost her. We've got a bit of a library, too. You see, Miss Mary hadn't no folks of her own, and she'd saved up a matter of a few hundred dollars out of her

teaching. So, when she knew she couldn't get well—'twas consumption in the family afore her—she left it so as we'd have the interest twice a year to get books with. It'll seem sort o' like she kept on sendin' 'em—the women and children like that." But, although the burly



Slab City was a small clearing—See page 71.

woodsman thus shifted the responsibility of the sentiment, I knew that he "liked it," too, and I loved him for it.

Having occasion, next day, to make some trifling purchase, I stepped into the "company-store," where one might buy anything, from a saw-blade to a bonnet. A tall young fellow of sixteen or seventeen stood behind the counter with a book in his hand. Hastily slipping a mark between the leaves, he came forward to wait upon me. While he was wrapping my

package, I glanced carelessly at the title of the little, worn volume. It was a copy of Virgil's *Aeneid*.

"Do you read Latin?" I asked.

"A little, sir. But I don't get on very well by myself."

"You have no teacher, then?"

"Not now, sir. There was a young lady — Miss Nevins; maybe you've heard of her — she showed me, nights, after the store was shut. You see, sir," he went on in a burst of confidence, "I'm bound to save up and get to school sometime. Miss Mary — Miss Nevins, I mean — she knew about it, and she said that all I could pick up in odd minutes would be so much clear gain. I was getting on tiptop, before" — the boy's lip trembled, but he controlled himself — "before she died, sir. This was her book."

"Won't you show me the lines that are troubling you?" said I.

His face lighted as he found the place. A few minutes' explanation cleared the difficult passage, and when he said: "I'm a thousand times thankful to you, sir! It's as plain as if Miss Mary had read it!" I had never received more welcome praise.

Making a round of visits, one day, I found in the cabin of a poor German laborer a young girl, crippled and deformed, who was busily making paper-flowers. Her handiwork was so delicately artistic, and her face so peaceful and bright, that I could but wonder at both.

"How pretty!" I said, taking up a

bunch of violets which needed only fragrance to deceive some honey-seeking bee or butterfly.

"Ah!" said she, "you knew not our Mees Mary! It was she who haf showed me. Before, I had not much to do — a little knitting only — and my fater so poor! I cry out my eyes — I wish all time that I might die. Then came Mees Mary — she sit down by me, and hold my hand, and talk like an angel. She make me learn this verse: 'Though I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh on me.' And, one Saturday, she bring a box, and in it all colors of paper and wire and silk, and she show me all day long. I laugh — I cry — I learn so fast! By and by she send my flowers away to be sold. I make money for my fater. I cry no more because I walk not like the others. All time I say in my heart, 'The Lord thinketh on me.'"

"But how do you bear it now that Miss Mary is dead?"

It was a cruel question, but I could not keep it back.

The girl's face flushed.

"My Mees Mary is not dead," she answered steadfastly. "And if the great Lord in heaven thinks of poor Gretchen, it won't be like Mees Mary to forget!"

I was admiring young Mrs. Pat Farley's geraniums one day.

"They are foine, yer honor," said she. "It's all along o' Miss Nevins, the swate crathur — our teacher that was. She

gave me the slips of 'em, and learned me how to nurse 'em. It wasn't all she learned me, ayther," said the little matron, twisting her apron-strings. "I don't know as I mind tellin' ye, seein' as ye're the minister. Ye see, I was worried over me Pat. He'd got in a way of passin' an avenin' in the saloon, an' comin' home with more'n a drop too much. Miss Mary, she happened in and found me takin' on, one day, after Pat an' me'd had words, an' she would have it out of me what was the matter. She pulled me down by her on the lounge there, an' she says, 'Nora, will ye let me talk to you just as if I was your sister, an' not be vexed?' I wasn't afraid to promise, for whoever could be vexed with Miss Mary! Says she,

'Nora, dear, just look around an' see if the home's quite pleasant for Pat.' Well, I did look around, sir. The floor was all of a mess, for I hadn't had the heart to put a broom to it, an' the cold snack we'd had for dinner stood on the table yet alongside o' the dirty dishes. I'd been a sales-lady down to Parkville before I was married, an' I'd never learnt to cook. 'An' Pat always loves to see his little wife look purty!' says she. Then I looked at me dress. It was all spotted with grease, an'

there was a place where I'd caught it on a nail an' hadn't mended it. I began to cry again with shame. 'No, no,' says Miss Mary, 'don't do that! I'll help you get the house tidy, an' then I'll show you how to mix some muffins for Pat's supper an' to make a nice mince out of the end of



"She pulled me down by her on the lounge."

that boiled beef.' Well, yer honor, by the time that Pat come home, everything was as nate as a new pin, an' I'd braided me hair, an' got on a clane gown an' apron. The smell o' the hot mate would 'a' made a king hungry, an' the muffins was like to blow open the oven-door for lightness. Pat stood still a minute, then he come over to me. 'Give us a kiss, Nora, me girl,' says he. 'I treated ye like a baste, the morn!' I'd learnt me lesson, sir. There ain't a better man now than mine."

I am giving you only scattered incidents, for scarcely a day passed in which I did not hear Miss Mary's name spoken.

When poor John Turner had been discharged from the mill for repeated drunkenness, and his wife and children were near starving, it was Miss Nevins who had begged the superintendent to give him one more trial. That was six months before, and the man had not touched a drop.

More wonderful still, she had succeeded in persuading Tim Carter out of the saloon business for the sake of the future of his Robert, her brightest pupil and the apple of his father's eye.

The little temperance league which she had organized among her school-children, I found still holding its regular meetings and rehearsing the simple programmes which she had arranged.

Do you wonder that I call her my "colleague"? Wherever I go, she seems to

have been always before me, opening my way and the hearts of my people. The wonder of it is not so much that a young girl dying at twenty years old should have done all this, but rather that her work has never stopped. Death has had no power over it. Her influence—warm and glowing as the light that vibrates through stellar spaces long after the quenching of the star whence it came—still

*"Engenders generous ardor, feeds pure love,
Begets the smiles that have no cruelty."*

I dare not fancy what her heavenly life may be—how wide the scope, how full the joy of its vaster ministries. Here, though unseen, she is still my helper—still one of

*"The choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence; live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
Of miserable aims that end with self,—
* * * * * * * * *
Whose music is the gladness of the world."*

ON DECK.

BY MARY A. P. STANSBURY.

JOHNNY WILKINS was past ten years old, but he could not remember having been off the Island more than once in his life. That was some two years before,

when his father had been at home for the last time, and had taken him and his little sister Janie to the mainland on the mail-steamer, for a holiday excursion. They

had spent a beautiful day, crowded full of new sights and experiences, and with no shadow on it of the sorrow which came afterwards. The ship, "Flying Nancy," of which Mr. Wilkins was second mate, was to make a three months' voyage, but this seemed so short in comparison with some former ones, that the good-byes were very bright and hopeful. They were all on the wharf to see him sail away—the mother, Johnny, Janie, little Millie, and baby Tom. His last words were spoken to Johnny:

"You're to be mother's right-hand man, my son. And, remember, that if you're to help her as you ought to, you've got to keep always on deck, and ready."

Johnny looked straight into his father's face, and his eyes shone.

"Aye, aye, sir!" said he in his clear, boyish voice.

The father laughed at that in his hearty seaman's fashion, and stooping, kissed his boy on both cheeks. Then he sprang over the side of the vessel, the gang-plank was drawn in, the great hawsers loosened, and, in a few moments more, the cumbersome craft began to move slowly away from the dock. They watched him wave his hand to them and then turn to his duty, and that was their last sight of him in this world, for the "Flying Nancy" went down in a terrible storm off the Cape, and all on board perished. She was a long time over-due, however, before her fate was certainly known.

"There's poor Hannah Wilkins on the 'Widow's Walk'!" the neighbors used often to say pityingly, as they passed the cottage during those weary weeks of suspense. If you had lived upon the Island, you would have known only too well what they meant by that. The people there have a fashion of building their houses with a narrow railed platform surrounding the ridge of the peaked roof, and, because so many an anxious wife and mother climbs to this high place to look out for the first sight of a ship which may—alas!—never come back, it has gotten its strange name, "The Widow's Walk."

When, at last, all hope was gone, it was Johnny who comforted his mother. Young as he was, a man's heart seemed to have grown in his little body.

"Don't cry, mother! Please don't!" he would plead. "I am to help you—father said so."

It is wonderful how much even a child may do, when his helpfulness is of that keen-eyed sort which sees without being told. Mrs. Wilkins never had to say, "Johnny, will you bring a pail of water?" or, "Johnny, the wood-box is empty," or, "Johnny, don't forget to split the kindlings," for his loving thought kept watch over all these things, trying hard to supply a want before it began to be felt.

There was not much money left with which to take care of the little family, and any paid work which a woman could

do, was hard to get in, the little fishing-village, where almost all the people were accustomed to do their own tasks unaided. If it had not been for the washing and ironing which Mrs. Wilkins did for the few strangers who came there in the summer months, she could hardly have made ends meet at all. Yet, young as he was, Johnny managed to bring home many a nickel, dime or quarter, to swell the little store.

"Where are you going, Johnny?" his mother would say sometimes, when she saw him putting on his cap, after the "chores" were done of a winter morning.

"To find a job, mother."

"You surely can't find anything to-day."

"I can't know without trying, mother," he would say. "You know, I promised father to keep 'on deck'!"

But it was only a little story of the second summer after the sailor-father was lost at sea, which I meant to tell you when I began.

There was no hotel in the hamlet, but there were several of the larger houses to which, as I said before, summer boarders sometimes came.

Johnny happened to be standing on the wharf, one June afternoon of this particular summer, when the steamer came in, puffing and whistling as usual, just as if she quite understood that her coming was the important event of the day. Three young men stood upon the lower deck,

waiting for the plank to be thrown out, and Johnny noticed with great interest that each of them supported at his side a curious, wheeled machine like nothing which the little boy had ever seen before. He watched eagerly while they trundled the strange contrivances ashore, and gave directions concerning the rest of their luggage.

"Can you show us the way to Skipper Lawson's, my boy?" asked one of them; and, when Johnny had pointed out the house at the end of the long, rambling street, the young men sprang each to a seat upon his odd vehicle, and went spinning dizzily along the dusty road.

"What a goose I am!" said the little islander to himself with sudden enlightenment. "They're bicycles, of course—the same as Jack Hardy was telling about."

He looked after them in wonder. "I wouldn't 'a' believed it!" thought he. "It's next to flying!"

He remembered with pleasure that he was to dig a great basket of clams for Mrs. Lawson, next morning.

"Maybe I can get another look at 'em, when I fetch the clams," he reflected.

He was not disappointed, for as he dragged his heavy hand-cart to Skipper Lawson's door, he saw the three bicycles leaning in a sorry row against the low palings of the dooryard fence. "A sorry row," I said, for how changed from all yesterday's brave glitter of steel and

enamel! Splashed with blotches of dried mud, and with their chains clogged with sand, the poor wheels showed only too

themselves came out with a bundle of soft cloths and a bottle of oil, and began the work of cleaning.



Johnny set about his new task very handily.—See page 80.

plainly that their riders must have been overtaken by the sudden rain-storm of the previous evening. Just as Johnny was discharging his load, the young men

“A wretched job this!” said one. “It will take at least an hour and a half to get this machine into tolerable shape again.”

“It comes hard on you, Dick!” an-

swered another, laughing. "No chance here to set one's wheel outside the door like a pair of boots for blacking, and take it in all smooth and polished!"

"No, indeed! I miss good, old Patrick in more ways than one."

"You might hire a cheap boy, Dick. You were always weakly," went on the other banteringly.

A thought flashed into Johnny's mind. He let go his cart, and stepped forward, hat in hand.

"Would you trust me to clean it for you, sir?" he asked respectfully.

The young man's glance ran over the sturdy, little figure, the bright face, and frank, straight-gazing eyes.

"Do you think you could do it well, my boy?"

"I think so, sir, if you would show me a little. I've never touched a bicycle, but I always take care of my mother's sewing-machine."

"I believe I will let you try, and, if you succeed, I will give you a quarter. Will that do?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Johnny with shining eyes.

He listened very closely to the young man's simple instructions, and then set about his new task so handily and carefully, that his employer watched him with great approbation, while the other two gentlemen paused occasionally in the midst of their rubbing to give him an encouraging word.

"Your wheel looks best of the three, Dick," said one, when the work was at last finished. "You could hardly do better than to engage our young friend on a sal- ary!"

"The very thing! And I would advise you to join me. Boy, what would you charge by the week to keep our three wheels clean this summer?"

Johnny's heart leaped.

"I—don't—know, sir," he stammered.

"Anything you think right."

"A dollar and a half?"

"Oh, sir, that is too much!"

"I don't think so—for such good work." He turned to his companions.

"All right! You may count us in, Dick."

That was the beginning of Johnny's "engagement," which added enough to the family income, during the visitors' long vacation, to buy the fuel for the whole winter coming.

But that was not all. For the three young men, careless and ease-loving as they seemed, learned to honor from their hearts the little boy who, for love of his mother, shunned no service however wearisome, and never slighted a task by leaving it half done.

They were talking together on the night before they were to go away from the Island, and this is what they said to each other:

"It's a jolly old place. I'm more than half sorry to leave it."

"Yes, it has been a glorious summer all around. I hardly know what I shall miss most."

"I do." It was Dick who spoke.

"What?"

"Johnny."

"You are right. He is as brave and true a little fellow as ever drew breath."

"Did you see the tears in his eyes when he had the wheels 'shined up' for the last time to-day? I saw him patting them on the sly, as if they had been alive."

"Poor little chap! He ought to have one of his own."

Dick drew a long, low whistle.

"And he might, if we were half gener-

ous. Think of the money we spend, boys, on things that we could as well as not do without! Suppose we should deny ourselves a little?"

Two weeks later, the steamer brought a bicycle to the Island, carefully crated and addressed to "Master Johnny Wilkins, from his three friends."

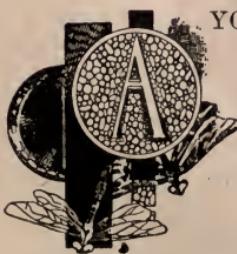
"Oh, mother!" said Johnny, when his gratitude and delight had found a tongue, "it's too much for me!"

His mother kissed him softly.

"Nothing is 'too much,'" said she, "for a boy who, thinking not of himself, and never forgetting his duty, is always 'on deck, and ready'!"

JACK KELLY'S GIRL.

BY MRS. S. H. COALE.



YOUNG girl stands in the doorway of a small cottage, looking out toward the sunset, and shading her eyes with her brown right hand.

Her face is flushed with running, for she has just come in from the far field, where her little brother went, an hour ago, to bring in the cow. Supper is all ready for

Johnny as soon as the milking is over, and, knowing that the bread is browning in the oven, and her mother busy taking in the day's washing, Katie has raced home as fast as her feet can carry her. And that is very fast, for her limbs are lithe and strong, and she can outrun Johnny any day.

Still the boy loiters along the path, for it has been a warm day and he is inclined to be lazy. So that his sister, before going back to the kitchen, looks toward

the distant field to see if there are any signs of him. A pretty, peaceful scene it is; the far stretch of rolling prairie green and fertile; the hills—or bluffs, as this Illinois girl would call them—rising beside the river; the river itself, flashing red in the late sunlight, and bordered with the rich fringe of cottonwood trees which marks its course. And all around the cottage-door the ground is as white as on a midwinter day, for the cottonwoods are in blossom, and the tall tree that completely overshadows the house has opened its large, grape-like clusters of pods, and the wind blows the white down through every open window, and shakes it in a thick drift upon the roof of the porch, and all over the short grass, until not a glimpse of green is to be seen beneath this sheet of summer snow.

But pretty as the cottonwood drift may be to our Eastern eyes, it is a sore trial to so neat a housekeeper as Katie. She has no time now to run for the broom and sweep the white down into a tidy pile and carry it away. Night is approaching rapidly, for black clouds are rolling up from the southwest—heavy storm-clouds, full of rain and muttering thunder, with an occasional vivid flash of forked lightning which reveals their piled masses of ominous darkness.

There has been plenty of rain of late—entirely too much indeed, for the country is flooded in many places. The river is over-full, turbulent and noisy, dashing it-

self against the railroad bridge close by the house, as if it had a spite against this obstacle to its progress, and was bent upon demolishing it. The bridge is a short one, for the river here is narrow, but all the stronger and deeper on that account. The trains go very cautiously over the wooden trestle-work, and Katie looks out of her little window at every one as it passes, for she is an engineer's daughter, and knows when each train is due. An engineer's daughter, did I say? His orphan, rather, for one terrible day her father was brought home to her, crushed and mangled, to die. Only one short hour of panting breath to bid good-by to wife and children; but John Kelly had time to look up into that faithful wife's pale face with even a smile, and whisper, "I saved the train, Mollie! And be sure you tell the children their father did his duty!" A good man, too, John Kelly had been; an engineer who would never allow the fireman in the cab behind him to curse and swear, as so many did, and who had tried to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

This was two years ago, and Katie is now fifteen years old. It seems to her that she can hear that last message of her father every time the trains come thundering over the bridge. She looks into the smoke-blackened faces of the engineers as they pass, and wonders if they, too, will "do their duty," when their time of trial comes. Most of them know her

by sight—"poor John Kelly's girl," they call her—and nod kindly to her as they go rushing by. Up in the cemetery on the hill, these comrades of his have placed a marble slab above his grave, and in the stone those touching last words are cut: "Tell my children their father did his duty!"

Johnny has scarcely gotten safely home and milked his cow before the storm is upon them. Such peals and crashes of thunder! Such a blaze of lightning! Such torrents of rain! After supper the three inmates of the solitary cottage cling together, for it is very lonely there in the frightful storm. And then the widow opens her Bible and reads to her children the beautiful and soothing twenty-third Psalm:

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me!"

And peace seems to settle in that little home, until suddenly a new and unaccustomed noise rises above the rush of thunder and wind and rain; a noise that causes every one of that little group to cry out in alarm. The crash of falling timbers, the shock of a terrific plunge, the loud roar of escaping steam, tell them the bridge has given way beneath some ill-fated train.

One moment of paralyzed terror, and then Katie springs to a closet and drags out an old lantern of her father's. It is a good lantern still, and throws a strong

stream of light beyond the door, as Katie and Mrs. Kelly, with frightened Johnny behind them, step out upon the porch and face the storm.

It is too late to render assistance, even if anyone could venture out upon the river. The engineer, fireman, and the few brakemen necessary to run the freight train are either killed outright or swept down by the current to some point below. Not a sound reaches the ears of the listeners, except the rush of the river, the roar of wind and rain, and the peals of mighty thunder. The glare of the lightning, illuminating the scene at intervals, shows them the skeleton of the ruined bridge, with the last cars of the long train still resting upon it. One strong rafter, on the side nearest them, seems still secure, standing black against the back-ground of fiery sky. And then, as they gaze, a wild cry breaks from Katie.

"Oh, mother! The Cannon-ball! The Cannon-ball!"

One hour more and the "Cannon-ball"—as the railroad men call the night express—will be due at the broken bridge. The night express stops for nothing; swift, direct as the deadly missile whose name it bears, it flies; the track is cleared for it, nor does it trouble itself about any of the way-stations. Even now it is hurrying onward toward its doom.

Mrs. Kelly turns a horror-stricken face upon her daughter. What can be done in such a crisis? But Katie, brave Katie,

with whom to think is to act, clasps her bodily and whirls her round on the very edge of the abyss. She reels for a moment, and when she recovers herself, finds

"I must go!" she cries. "If I can get to Belvidere, the station-master will flag the train and stop it. Good-by, mother darling! Good-by, Johnny! There is no time to be lost!"

that her lantern is blown out. She stands alone in total darkness, above the foaming whirlpool, with not even that friendly ray to aid her on her dangerous journey.

"No! No!" cries the poor mother, holding her back in despair. "How could you go? There is no way of crossing the river. The boat is swept away!"

A dazed sense of terror overpowers her, and then the trustful words of the Psalm steal through her memory: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me!"

"I can cross on that!" cries Katie, pointing to the solitary beam which stretches over the white mass of seething water. "I'm not afraid! Mother, dear, think of those people — a whole train full — coming nearer and nearer every minute to certain death! Remember, mother, how father did his duty, and don't keep me back!"

And Mrs. Kelly resists no longer. Her dying husband's words are like a command. With one strained embrace Katie is gone. She has dashed along the road to the end of the bridge, an old shawl over her head, the bright lantern in her hand, her whole mind bent upon saving the train. For a few yards upon the bridge she is safe enough, for it is in the middle of the stream, where the current is strongest, that the supports have gone down under the weight of the heavy freight train. Just as she reaches this chasm, and pauses to gather her thoughts and strength to face the danger before her, a powerful gust of wind seizes her

Throwing away the now useless lantern, she waits for the next lightning-flash, then crawls on the great beam which still stretches safely across to the other side. With both arms thrown around its wet and slippery sides, inch by inch she creeps along; dizzy, half-blinded by the dazzling lightning, deafened by the roar and rush below, and the terrible thunder above. But she knows no fear; all her thought, all her prayer, is that she may be in time to accomplish her object — to save the precious lives of those so unconscious of their danger.

With her prayer, too, is mingled the remembrance of her dying father's words. This surely must be her "duty." If she fails, if she dies, then it is no more than he has done before her; no more than hundreds of brave railroad men are doing every day — unknown heroes, unhonored and unpraised, holding their lives in their hands, each morning as they turn away

from home and children, with the kisses upon their lips which may be the last! And anyway, and always, God will take care of mother and Johnny.

It is not many yards across the chasm, and somehow she is over at last. Then swiftly she picks her way along the trestle-work; then, as fast as her fleet young limbs can carry her—away like a flash in a mad race against time, along the winding track! It is yet a full mile to Belvidere, and now quite twelve o'clock. The rain still pours, but less steadily; there are occasional breaks in the rolling clouds, showing the pale smile of a watery moon. The reverberations of the thunder are more distant and Katie takes heart as she rushes along the track; she may yet be in time!

Hark! is that the shriek of a locomotive, piercing the night? The station is in sight, the light from its solitary room streaming toward her. Panting, breathless, al-



most exhausted, she reaches the platform, stalks up to her, and shakes her hand. and pounds with all her might upon the door. Thank God! the station-agent hears her, and opens it. In a few words her tale is told, the signal of warning is in its place, and then they hear, along the rails, the vibration of the coming train. With a scream and a roar, it comes into view around a curve; then its speed slackens as the engineer observes the signal; more and more slowly it approaches the station, until, with an indignant snort of protest against this unexpected interruption, it stops altogether.

The conductor, in his neat uniform, springs to the platform to find out what is the matter. He, too, knows "poor Jack Kelly's girl," and never thinks of doubting her. To leap back upon his train, and give his orders, is the work of a moment, and then the news of what Katie has done flies like wildfire through the cars. Men, half asleep, grumbling and provoked at the delay, wake to keen excitement at her story and admiration of her courage. And windows are raised, and the delicate faces of ladies peer out, eager to see the fifteen-year-old girl who has risked her life to save theirs. Even an Indian, a dried-up old fellow, with his

"Good squaw! brave squaw!" he grunts approvingly, and tells her he will speak her praises to the women of his tribe, at his reservation beyond the mountains.

Then she is taken into the warm, lighted cars, and every one tries to do her honor. Money is pressed upon her, but she shakes her head. It is not for money that she has done this thing. She looks up at the kind ladies who surround her, with a sweet, grave expression in her bonny blue eyes. She is thinking of her father.

"I have only done my duty," says Katie Kelly, with a sunny smile.

And so, safe after her terrible experience, praised by the friends who surround her, Katie sleeps at last, but not until she has thanked Him who has indeed guided her through the valley of the shadow of death, so that she felt no fear and knew no evil. And when the day breaks, the train creeps slowly over the mended bridge, and Katie finds mother and brother and home again. And thinking of her father's last words, her heart is filled with a great peace; for this, she knows, is what he would have wished, that in her time of trial she, too, should be



THE NEW MEMBER'S IDEA.

BY IDA REED SMITH.



THE golden days of October were fast drawing to an end. The maples on either side of the wide streets of Westmere had run the entire color scale from palest yellow to deepest scarlet without missing a tone or half-tone of orange or red, while the oaks of the park had wrapped close around them their royal robes of dusky crimson as though to protect their sturdy limbs from the keen wind, November's forerunner, that now and then came careering out of the gray northwest. In the gardens the flames of brilliant geraniums and nasturtiums were still flickering faintly, but everywhere the advance of winter's white-helmeted hosts seemed to have been made known, and summer's soldiery was in full retreat, leaving the ground strewn with its gay banners and outworn uniforms.

The days had grown shorter and shorter, and the Boys' Club now held its regular sessions in the homes of its various members, instead of gathering in one particular corner of the park—which was a great improvement, so said the boys' mothers.

Does somebody ask what the "Boys' Club" was? Well, it began as a reading club in the winter before. In the spring it became an amateur botanists' club, in the summer it was a base-ball club, and at this present writing it was just a club "without any handle to it," as one of the boys remarked in answer to the question stated above. Its members came together once in two weeks, partly because they had grown into the habit, but largely because they were boys having the same tastes and the same occupation—the occupation being regular attendance at school, the tastes a thoroughly boyish liking for sociability and "good times," and a hearty appreciation of the nuts, apples, pop-corn, taffy, fried cakes, gingersnaps, etc., etc., which abounded at the Club meetings, for the mothers of Westmere, wise in their day and generation, never failed to provide some such interesting topic for the discussion of the Club, for which courtesy the Club invariably returned a stately and ceremonious vote of thanks, together with an empty fruit dish or cake basket.

On this particular October evening the dozen boys of the Club were gathered in Bart Russell's room, which by common

consent was the cosiest "den" possessed by any boy of the place. It was a spot where the individuality of the owner was evident in every bit of furnishing, from the severe iron bedstead to the gray fox-skin that lay before the book-case. Two tennis rackets were crossed over the door and a net was festooned over the windows in lieu of drapery. A fish-pole, basket and landing net were grouped above the pictures on the side wall, and a splintered ball-club tied with crimson and gold ribbon spoke eloquently of the day when Bart's "three-base-hit" had turned impending defeat into a glorious victory.

The boys were disposed around the room on camp-chairs, couch, bed and floor, in attitudes more comfortable than elegant, discussing with animation the prospect of good chestnutting when a little harder frost should unlock the prickly prisons, when there was a rap at the door, and Bart, answering it, returned with a delicious looking cake whose dark sides betokened a wealth of spices and "plums" and whose snowy frosting was thick enough to satisfy the sweetest sweet-tooth in the Club. On it lay a card inscribed:

"In honor of the New Member."

With much gravity Bart placed the cake on a small table which he wheeled in front of the big chair where Carrol Carmer sat.

"There, sir!" said he as he handed him the card. "If you would prove yourself

worthy of full membership in this ancient and honorable body, proceed to divide this lump of 'sugar and spice and all that's nice' into twelve equal parts. And woe be to you if one twelfth exceeds another by so much as a hair's breadth!"

"I tremble, but obey!" laughed Carrol. "Bring hither the knife!" Then, as Bart handed it to him he cut the cake in halves, in quarters, and each quarter into thirds, saying as he made the last cut: "'Tis done, and waits your pleasure, gentlemen."

The eleven boys filed in front of him chanting, "'Tis done, 'tis done; 'tis well done and done quickly!" each receiving a generous portion and returning to his seat to discuss its merits at leisure.

"I say, fellows," said Dix Denby, as he carefully separated cake and frosting and laid the latter aside as a last delicate morsel, "do you know that a week from tomorrow night is Halloween?"

"So it is!" said several in chorus. "Hadn't thought of it before, though."

"What's to be the fun this year?" questioned Percy Monroe. "Same old thing, I suppose. Change signs, carry off gates and turn the school-bell wrong side up."

"I think those tricks are getting too stale to be funny," said Bart, shaking his head. "Let's do something original, and mark a new era in Halloween pranks. That sign, gate and bell business must have come over in the 'Mayflower.'"

"The 'Mayflower' didn't carry any

such frivolous freight," said jolly Jack Lowther, laughing with his mouth full. " Lay it off on the 'Pinta' or 'Santa Maria,' Bart. Columbus won't mind."

" Let's say the Ark, and be done with it," said Ellis Emerson. " Anyway, they are old enough to be put on the retired list. But what shall we do instead?"

There was a pause. Nobody seemed ready with suggestions.

" Question!" called Percy. " Question! Question! Question!" went round the entire circle. Then Bart said with a roguish look at Carrol, who was thoughtfully drumming on the empty cake plate with the knife:

" I move we leave it to the new member! He has tasted of the sweets of Club membership, now let him take his share of that which isn't so pleasant!"

" All right, if you are determined to make a lion out of me by giving me the lion's share," was the ready answer.

" Roar on, Leo, and let's see how scared you can be!" said Jack encouragingly.



The new member's idea.

" I'll roar you as gently as a dove," began Carrol, but the boys groaned with one accord, remembering the Shakespearean labors of the previous winter, and

Carrol desisted from further quotation. Rapping on the table with the knife-handle to secure order, he said:

"Of course, I don't know what you fellows have done to celebrate Halloween, but I guess it's just the regular thing which is common everywhere. I can't imagine how such tricks came to be so popular, unless it was because people felt that they ought to help out the old Scotch notion that on this particular night the witches and mischievous imps took possession of the universe and did as they pleased with it."

"According to that it ought to be called 'All Evil Spirits' instead of 'All-Saints,'" said Dix, who sat on a hassock hugging one knee. "Queer notion, wasn't it, to put such wild doings on 'All-Saints' or 'Holy Eve'?"

"Come back to the point," said Percy. "What are we going to do on this particular Halloween to break the old custom?"

"Our lion hasn't got that far in his roaring," said Bart in a mock aside; and Carrol flushed a little but said:

"Well, what do you say to making Halloween a time of helpfulness instead of annoyance?"

"Suits me," answered Bart tersely. "How?"

"Suppose we get a new sign for Mrs. Hampton," suggested Carrol. "Hers was blown down and broken in the last storm."

"We put that up over old Captain Cripps' carpenter shop last year," laughed Jack, "and it fitted first rate—'Boarding by the Day or Week.' Well, I'll furnish the board for a new sign."

"I'll furnish the paint and do the work," said Ellis; while Dix chimed in with:

"Why can't we fix up old Miss Fitz's gate? I saw her trying to fasten on one of those shaky pickets the other day, and she pounded her fingers seven times out of twelve whacks aimed at the nail."

"Good idea, my son!" said Bart, patting his friend's head with a grave, fatherly air. "What next?"

"If it weren't such a big job, I'd propose that we dig old Uncle Jerry Jenkins' potatoes for him," said Percy. "He's been having the 'rumatiz,' as he calls it, lately, and he's dreadfully afraid he can't get all his potatoes in before the hard frosts."

"Just the thing!" said Bart heartily. "Big jobs suit us exactly, Perce. Let's see"—hastily consulting an almanac—"Yes, it'll be good moonlight. Won't it be a jolly surprise though?"

So one after another the dozen boys proposed kindly surprises for the Halloween celebration, and it was really more fun carrying them out than the old way ever had been. The Club declared unanimously that the new member's idea was a good one, well worth trying again another year, while Mrs. Hampton, Miss Fitz,

Uncle Jerry and many others decided that the new Halloween observance was altogether a fine thing. And if those who read this story are disposed to test the idea for themselves perhaps they will come to the same conclusion.

HEW TO THE LINE.

BY H. L. FRISBIE.



BEFORE Bessemer had solved the great problem of reducing the cost of steel, until it has come into general use and almost revolutionized the world, all ships were constructed of wood. Any one predicting the coming of a day when great steel vessels would cross the ocean at a speed then unattainable, would have been looked upon as an idle dreamer, or bordering upon lunacy.

Compared with the present, it was a day of small things. A wooden ship of a few hundred tons' burden was looked upon as a wonderful mechanical achievement — and so it was; but now the seas are plowed by great floating palaces of steel carrying thousands of tons of merchandise, and a whole village of people, at a rate of speed rivaling a race-horse at its best pace.

The old-time ships were little more than a captain's gig compared with these gigantic creations of mechanical skill. It does not seem possible to much further enlarge and improve these marine monsters. The powers of man are wonderful, yet limited by boundaries beyond which they cannot pass; but who shall locate and define these metes and bounds, placing them near at hand or far away? Only Almighty and Infinite wisdom and knowledge, seeing the end from the beginning, can say: "Beyond this point there is no thoroughfare; here further progress is barred."

In the yards where wooden ships were constructed, many craftsmen were employed. Workers in wood and iron, carpenters, blacksmiths, calkers, makers of sails and cordage, and men to rig the ships, were necessary to complete the work. Some were artisans of great skill who executed the more difficult parts of the work and gave to it the finishing

touches. Others were less experienced, yet valuable and necessary aids in executing the plans of the builders. Still others were apprentices learning the mysteries of the trade, fitting themselves for the higher grades of labor, aspiring to be something more than mere hewers of wood. Every man was paid according to his skill and ability to further the work, and contribute to its final completion and ultimate success. The force was divided into gangs, over which foremen were placed, whose duty it was to see that the work was done according to the plans of the architect.

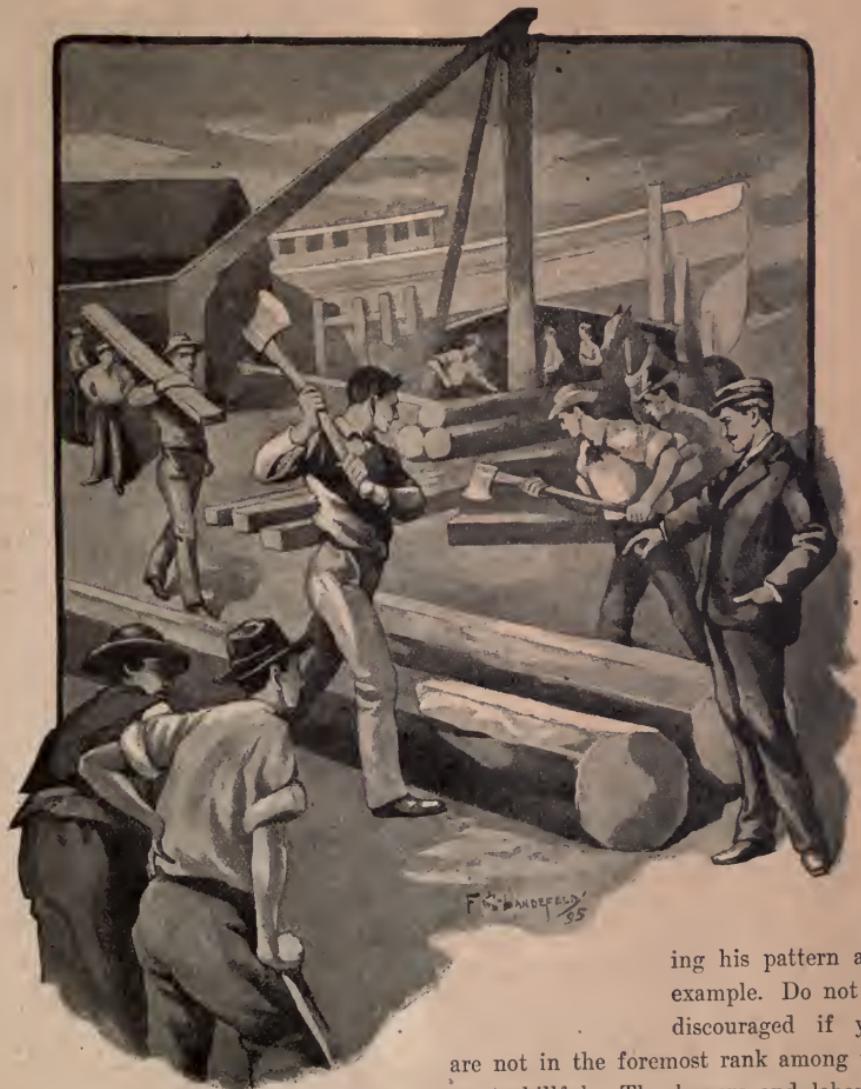
In house - building everything is regulated by square, plumb and level. Many parts are exact duplicates of other parts, but in ship-work it is of rare occurrence to find two pieces that are exactly alike; each one must be adapted to the place it is designed to fill. Every timber must be fashioned after a pattern, and every plank hewn to fit the place it is intended to occupy. It was the duty of the foreman to trace out the pattern and line the work to guide the workmen in shaping the different parts required to constitute a perfect whole. When this marking was done, the ax-men and hewers performed their duties.

While it was of the greatest importance that the tracing should be perfectly accurate, it was of no less importance that the ax-men should hew exactly to the line — a chip too many, cutting beyond the mark,

and the stick was spoiled; a chip uncut, and the piece would not fit in the place for which it was intended. "Hew to the line" was the constant admonition of the foreman to his apprentices. It was also the first step on the road towards becoming skillful workmen and worthy of being advanced to more important duties. No matter how correctly the work was planned and the tracings made, if the lines were not followed, the results were unsatisfactory, and the workman who failed in this was not long retained in the service.

Each set of men had its allotted part to perform. The hewers who formed and shaped the rough sticks of timber were as essential as the more skillful who finished the work. The common laborer who helped only to bear burdens and do what required little or no skill, was as necessary and worthy of commendation as any other. All were parts of a complete organization, each doing his work until a finished ship stood ready to do its part in moving the commerce of the world.

"Hew to the line" is a good rule to apply to all the affairs of life both spiritual and temporal. The great Architect of the universe has furnished faultless plans and traced them so plainly in his Word that they cannot be mistaken if earnestly studied. He demands careful following of the lines so clearly marked for the guidance of his workers. The most skillful workman could not build a ship without a model and patterns, trac-



F. B. Landefeld
1895

ing his pattern and example. Do not be discouraged if you are not in the foremost rank among the most skillful. The hewers and laborers were necessary to prepare the work for the finishing touches. They were worthy to receive their wages, and each day in-

ings and lines; neither can God's workers accomplish much good in the world without taking Christ as their model, follow-

creased their fitness for a higher grade of service, to which they were called when the Master saw that they were worthy of advancement.

Do well whatever is under your hands to do. If only a humble laborer, be a faithful servant, and you will some day be called to wield the ax; when that is given into your hands, "hew to the line," and in due time you will be called to lay it aside for other tools requiring more skill to use effectively.

Youth is the apprentice time when knowledge is most easily acquired. Begin

your good work early in life, and you will have all the more time in which to labor for the reward awaiting those who prove their fitness for better things, by faithfully performing humble duties, and carefully hewing to the line.

The more in number the days of labor performed by the workmen, the larger the amount of wages due when the day of settlement came; so the more of the Lord's work you do, the greater will be the reward when your work is done and the Master says, "Well done, good and faithful workman; enter into thy rest."

A MISSION SCHOOL IN MEXICO.

BY ANNIE MARIA BARNES.



T one of our mission schools in Mexico it was the custom to appoint two children for each week to do the dish-washing.

The supper dishes were usually washed just at dark. One evening Marta, Izabel's companion washer, was sick, and it was told Izabel that she must go alone to wash the dishes. She was frightened, for in addition to staying in the kitchen alone, there was a dark passage through which she had to go. What was she to

do? Surely some evil would happen to her. Then a thought came to her. It was not long that Izabel had been under the teachings of the missionaries. There was much still in her mind of darkness and superstition. Not yet had the clear, true light come into her heart.

What did Izabel do? She took two matches—tiny wax matches such as they use in Mexico with which to light candles and lamps—and, fastening them together in the shape of a cross, held them before her. Then, muttering a prayer to the Virgin, she dashed through

the dark passage. In the kitchen she fastened up the cross where she could see it.

"O Izabel!" said Marta when she told her about it, "how could you have done it?"

"There was no other way," returned Izabel; "I was frightened. Marta, are you not afraid of the dark?"

"I used to be," admitted Marta candidly.

"Why are you not now?"

"Because I have learned to trust One who can be with me in the dark as well as in the light."

"That is God, I know," said Izabel. Then after a moment's silence she added, "But I do not see how that can be. God is in heaven. Miss Gilbert, our teacher, told us so."

"So he is, dear Izabel, but God can be everywhere. He can be with us here on earth as well as in heaven. He can make us feel his presence in the dark just the same as when we look upward toward the blazing sun, and know that he is there. If only we'll love him, he will come and dwell in our hearts—that is, his Spirit will—and wherever we go we'll feel that he is with us."

Izabel listened attentively. She seemed deeply touched.

"Marta," she asked again, "were you ever afraid of the dark?"

"Oh, yes," admitted Marta, "before I heard of God, our Savior, and that he could be with me, never mind where I went, I was awfully afraid of the dark, even as afraid of it as you are, dear Izabel. I could not bear to go into it even a moment alone."

"What did you do then?"

Marta blushed and looked confused.

"What did you do?" persisted Izabel.

"Just as you did, dear Izabel; I made the sign of the cross, or rather the cross itself, and called on the Virgin and Saints. But I knew no better. This is why I can all the more plead with you, Izabel, because I know now how foolish it was. Oh, if you would never do it again!"

Izabel hung her head a moment, then she looked up bravely.

"I know—that is, I think I can say, dear Marta, that I never will again. I know I never want to."

"That is my own brave Izabel. God alone has the power to take care of us," continued Marta, "to keep us from evil; and not the Virgin or the Saints, who were but people after all. Oh, I was so happy when I learned that!—that God could take care of me. Now I am not afraid to go in the dark, for I feel that God is with me."

How many of us can say with brave, trusting Marta, "God is with me"?

CHILDREN AND CHICKENS IN MEXICO.

BY ANNIE MARIA BARNES.

IMUST tell you that the boys and girls in Mexico love chickens just as the boys and girls in this country do, and make great pets of them. But the chickens there do not have so good a time as the chickens here, for there is no nice yard in which to run. (I am writing about the chickens in Mexican cities.)

What would you think of chicken-coops on top of the houses? Well, that is where ever so many of the chickens are raised. As the tops of the houses are flat, this can easily be done. And the poor things get so little to eat, they look lean and starved, and their feathers stand all sorts of ways, and are not smooth and glossy as are the feathers of our chickens. But the children love them dearly. They will let them come into the rooms and play all about. Sometimes they even sleep with them tightly hugged against their breasts. One little boy loved his chicken so well he couldn't bear to be parted from it. So he took it to school hidden under

his blanket. In the midst of the recitation the chicken scrambled out, flew to the top of the teacher's desk, and, flapping its wings, crowed lustily. All the children laughed, of course, but the teacher looked very grave. She told Manuel that school was not the place for chickens, so he never ventured to carry Blanquo any more.

One of the saddest things about chickens in Mexico is that they are used to gamble with. They have cock-pits where they are trained to fight. These chickens are well kept. Sometimes you will see a pair of them tied to the door of a building, or to the leg of a table within the building, and, if you are familiar with Mexico and the ways of the people, you will know that their owners are somewhere near getting ready for the fight.

“Pollos” (pronounced polyos) is the name for chickens in Mexico. A hen they call “gallina,” and her eggs are called “heuvsos.” In some places they call eggs “little whities.” The Mexican-Indian word for it is “blanquillos.”

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